

The role of elite rivalry and ethnic politics in livestock raids in northern Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that livestock raids and pastoralists' competition over water and pastures in north-western Kenya are manifestations of local ethnic political contests and rivalries. The culture of raiding among the Samburu, Turkana, Pokot, Borana, Gabra and Rendille communities has changed over the last 40 years. Whereas elders were once the gatekeepers of communal institutions, today new actors are at the forefront of new forms of violent raids. Among Samburu and Turkana communities, politicians and shrewd businessmen have emerged to exploit ethnic rivalry that exists between these groups and use it to mobilise raids. These political and business elites play influencing roles in raiding by paying and arming warriors to carry out raids. Competition for political influence is closely intertwined with competition over scarce water resources and grazing pastures among Turkana and Samburu. Given that pastoralists survive on decreasing pasture and water resources, our study shows that political elites arm their communities during the dry season to gain the upper hand in contests over access to limited

resources. Livestock raids no longer occur in the traditional context of restocking, but rather as an expression and manifestation of local ethnic politics and political contests between ethnic kingpins. The study uses primary field data from a case study collected through in-depth interviews, oral history and group discussions with various actors.

INTRODUCTION

The practice of livestock raiding among pastoralist groups in northern Kenya is an age-old tradition that for a long time resulted in increasing inter-ethnic violence and supported the pastoralists' social economy. Until the late 1970s, the raids fulfilled functions of 'warrior-building', livestock genetic crossbreeding, pasture exploitation, control and group negotiations. Traditions and peacebuilding protocols, besides the rudimentary technology of weapons such as sticks and spears, were used to keep conflicts at a bearable intensity level. During these times livestock raids occurred under a set of mutually agreed rules that were laid down by elders and passed from one generation to another. According to these rules, raids took place mainly to replenish stock after periods of drought, which often decimated the livestock population (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2010). Furthermore, raids were conducted on neighbouring communities to raise livestock for the payment of bridewealth. The practice of raiding to obtain bridewealth was premised on the notion that warriors had to prove their bravery to potential brides by showing courage and going into 'battle' to acquire livestock. Marrying using raided livestock as bridewealth was therefore a manifestation of prestige for the groom and great honour for the bride (Heald 1997; Fleisher 2000).

Livestock raids have in the past (before the 1970s) therefore been driven by several factors and actors. Among the former were seasonality and environmental change. In this case raids occurred after periods of drought. Raids were therefore a means by which pastoralist households maintained the sustainability of their livelihoods by restocking (Witsenburg & Adano 2009; Kaimba *et al.* 2011). Second, traditional livestock raiding was driven by the need for inter-communal socio-economic interaction (Osamba 2000). Given the significant and prominent role cattle play in the day-to-day lives of pastoralists in northern Kenya, raiding was a means by which communities interacted and built relationships¹ through the formation of alliances with others, gained respect and prestige among other ethnic groups, and maintained peace (Government of Kenya 2006: 19). At the same time, raiding

resulted in bad ethnic relations and created enemies among groups. Hendrickson *et al.* (1998) identified two forms of livestock raiding; what they termed *traditional raiding* was distributional, aimed at sustaining pastoralists' lives through forceful transfer of livestock between families after periods of drought. They also noted the emergence of *predatory raiding*, which aimed at devastating pastoralists' households by acquiring all their livestock for sale in urban markets. The practice of raiding brought elders from neighbouring communities together to lay down the rules and to act as arbiters in case warriors violated the raiding stipulations (Skoggard & Adem 2010; Schilling *et al.* 2012). It further brought neighbouring warriors together as worthy competitors for the young women in their communities, and for the pride and praise that accompanied noted prowess and success in livestock raids as expressed in traditional folklore (Heald 1997).

Traditional livestock raiding was regulated by elders, who sanctioned warriors for killing women, children and the elderly (Fleisher 2000; Mulugeta & Hagmann 2008; Mkutu 2010). Such acts were considered taboo, and in most cases, when they were perpetrated, compensation in the form of herds of cattle was always given to make peace between neighbouring groups. Warriors who participated in raids were supervised by elders. For a raid to be successful the warriors needed the blessings of the elders, and this meant that warriors could not unilaterally venture into unsanctioned raids since this would be deemed an act of aggression by neighbouring communities. Young women, as potential brides of the warriors, also played a central role, especially by urging their suitors to prove their courage by going for a raid and bringing home raided animals as bridewealth (Glowacki & Gonc 2013; Kilaka 2013). Thus, various actors abided by the rules of raiding.

Since the 1970s, livestock raiding as a traditional practice has changed tremendously. Although other issues, such as the attempt to ensure access to resources, as well as economic factors, have played roles in raids, what has mainly driven and become intertwined with these other issues are manifestations of ethnic competition for resources and political supremacy. Today, livestock raids between the Turkana and Samburu in Samburu North sub-County occur not as a means by which warriors from the two groups acquire livestock for payment of bridewealth but rather as a means by which warriors acting at the behest of elites and community politicians, for instance, can disenfranchise competitors from the neighbouring community from voting for the preferred candidate. In this case, livestock raids have transformed into a political tool in the hands of politicians and budding politicians

through which potential voters for rival candidates are displaced through sheer violence and the burning of their homesteads, thus forcing their movement out of the electoral area (Osamba 2000). Political elites use raids to maintain political hegemony of communities and control of power.

Given the insecurity that has pervaded northern Kenya since independence, political leaders have perfected the mantra of campaigning on the pretext of ‘protection’. Thus aspiring politicians use their clout and influence during and after political campaigns to prove their ‘protection credentials’ by supplying arms and ammunition to communities which subsequently use these not only for self-protection but also for aggression against neighbouring groups. There is evidence from our research and also from newspaper articles in eastern Africa that elites from pastoralist groups and politicians are at the forefront in purchasing weapons and ammunition, which are then distributed to community warriors during periods of inter-ethnic tension (see Wachira 2015). The purchased weapons are then used for ‘ethnic cleansing’ purposes with the sole aim of uprooting rival groups from the resource base to guarantee exclusive access for one group to shared inter-communal resources such as grazing land or water sources.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in northern Kenya is facilitated by elite groups who operate legal businesses such as transport and wholesale shops while also clandestinely dealing in the illicit gun markets. The limited presence of security personnel in these areas and their willingness to accept bribes enable the gun trade by pastoralist elites in northern Kenya (Leff 2009; Sharamo 2014; Wachira 2015). Guns such as the AK47, G3, HK11 and M16 assault rifles are acquired by elites and passed on to warriors through patron–client relationships nurtured in the pursuit of political interests through ethnic identities. For instance, in December 2014, interviews² with senior security officers in Samburu North sub-County revealed the use of state vehicles to distribute ammunition to warriors at night. Once warriors acquire guns, they are further mobilised to conduct massive live-stock raids by the same elites, who seek to meet the huge beef demand of the populations in urban centres such as Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret (also see Fleisher 2000; Eaton 2008). The practice of livestock raiding is therefore mostly driven by the economic and political interests of the elites from these regions, to the detriment of inter-ethnic cohesion that is needed to sustain resource-sharing among pastoralist groups in northern Kenya. The key question posed in this paper is: what role do pastoralist elites play in the conflicts between

the Samburu and Turkana communities? We also discuss the various actors who help facilitate the business of the political elites in their raids, and debunk studies that over-emphasise the role of environmental/resource scarcity in driving livestock raids; we rather identify the growing pastoralist elites in northern Kenya as being at the centre of violent and ethnically driven livestock raids between these groups.

Root causes of livestock raids in Kenya

The changing face of livestock raids in Kenya from the traditional raiding system to the present situation has seen a rise in violent raids, militant groups facilitated by a thriving arms business, and a greater loss of lives. Mulugeta & Hagmann (2008) state that livestock raiding involves organised and forceful invasion to acquire livestock from pastoralist groups, and that it has been a survival strategy among pastoralists in East Africa. The Horn of Africa has often been described as the greatest hotspot of violent pastoralist contestation and livestock raiding (Adano *et al.* 2012; Eaton 2012). Livestock raids have assumed violent forms (Mwangi 2006; Witsenburg & Adano 2009) which involve the use of sophisticated arms (Mkutu 2006, 2008; Bevan 2008; Schilling *et al.* 2012). Historically, livestock raiding in north-west Kenya was mainly peaceful from 1929, after the colonial pacification of the Turkana (Spencer 1965; Lamphear 1976; Greiner *et al.* 2011), until independence. Violent raids in northern Kenya re-emerged with the onset of Ngoroko raids in the mid-1960s (Tablino 2006; Bollig & Österle 2007). In Samburu North the upsurge of violent raids started in 1996 after the acquisition of firearms by the Turkana and Samburu (Galaty 2005; Mkutu 2005). Recent trends in raiding have also seen violent pastoral raids and contestations among ethnic groups (Catley *et al.* 2013; Sharamo 2014).

Livestock raids are complex and rooted in more than just one sole cause. Pastoral raids must be seen within the larger context of political and social, and resource- and ethnicity-related issues. This is because their causes, as well as the actors, involve cleavages along such lines. McCabe (2004) notes that raiding is a response to political as well as environmental events, and not just to scarcity. Thus there is a political ecology within which livestock raiding in Kenya should be understood, instead of some aspect of the literature that has often tended to over-emphasise pastoralist raids as competition over natural resources due to droughts and the impact of climate change (see Witsenburg & Adano 2009; Ide *et al.* 2014). In the literature, the underlying causes

of raiding have been found by many a scholar to emanate from poverty, payment of bridewealth, accumulation of general wealth, retaliation and a culture of revenge, the lucrative cross-border cattle trade, the availability and easy access to small arms, climate change and resource scarcity, ethnic rivalries and politics (Bollig 1993; Fleisher 2000; Krätli & Swift 1999; McCabe 2004; Mkutu 2006; Eaton 2008; Witsenburg & Adano 2009; Schilling *et al.* 2012). Schilling *et al.* (2012), for instance, who studied raids between the Turkana and the Pokot, found that raiders' reasons for engaging in raiding among Turkana were 'hunger', 'drought' and 'wealth', while the Pokot named payment of bridewealth, accumulation of wealth and the defending or expansion of territory. The availability of small arms in Kenya makes raiding more frequent and violent (Mkutu 2008). Raids between the Turkana and the Pokot, for instance, have involved the use of sophisticated arms. Our own study has found that these causes of raids must be situated within the role political elites play in manipulating, for instance, access to resources (droughts and the need to replenish lost cattle) and ethnic cleavages to attain their political ends (power).

Kratli & Swift (1999) maintain that many actors in pastoral raids and conflicts in Kenya are sometimes hidden and will need a conflict-stakeholder analysis to identify them. They found in their study that some actors could play multiple roles, which can fuel conflicts:

Of course, the (roles of the actors) may overlap. Individual raiders may engage in illegal trade with looted guns. Cattle traders may also be elders, politicians or administrators, and so may weapon dealers. Security forces may trade in weapons. Politicians may have interests in national/international business. Any of these may have a herd of their own, which may be built up by raiding, or be reduced by being raided by others.' (Krätli & Swift 1999: 7)

Thus various actors who do not physically take part in raids surreptitiously fund and support raids in pursuing their own interests. This is why Eaton (2008) says that livestock raiding is perpetuated and aided by rogue elements within the state comprised of businessmen or politicians. Also, it has been suggested that pastoral violence in Kenya is a consequence of state weakness, since there is insecurity, which allows and even encourages the flourishing of an illegal arms trade used to perpetuate violence by raiding groups (see Fleisher 2000; Bevan 2008). Fleisher (2000) particularly describes livestock raiding as the result of a bankrupt state which has failed to resolve the issue. Therefore, causes of livestock raiding in Kenya involve a plethora of factors which must be understood from a political ecology perspective.

Ethnic identity/identity politics and pastoral violence

Ethnicity is a fluid topic that can be manipulated by many interested actors for their own benefit. Lentz & Nugent (2000: 2) note that “‘Ethnicity’ is a dazzling, ambiguous category, which is at once descriptive, analytical and evaluative-normative’ and has been interpreted by various people not only in academia, but also in the world of politics and the media. Ethnicity is such a powerful resource for identification and collectivities. Groups will often come together under the banner of their collective identity to achieve aims such as raiding. Most ethnicities in East Africa are constructed, although many groups claim primordial ethnicity. We do not in any way argue that primordial ethnicities do not exist in Kenya; our argument here is that ethnicity is created and constructed into the world of livestock raiding in Kenya. The constructivist perspective on ethnicity, which views it as being ‘invented’, is very important for our discussions on elite manipulation of ethnic identities in our study area. Schlee (2008) states that ethnic groups in northern Kenya are political and military entities and are subject to power politics. Our conception of identity construction is more relevant in Lentz & Nugent’s (2000) explication that constructionists lay emphasis on the manipulability of ethnicity as a guise for the pursuit of self-interest. Identity politics remain very strong in Kenya and are manifested in all facets of social and political life. This is true of Horowitz’s (1985) conceptualisation of ethnicity as manipulable. In livestock raiding, the social actors engaged in the raids are subjects of these inventions by ‘rogue’ people who play on identity differences to achieve their ends (see also Eaton 2008). Groups in Kenya have often played the ‘ethnic card’ to encourage raiding. This is because raiding groups in Kenya often tried to maintain ethnic boundaries or ethnic belonging and attachment which are known to create a sense of boundary among a group in opposition to others (Horowitz 1985).

Ethnicity is a mobilisable base around which identity cleavages among groups, political competition and conflict come to be organised. Posner (2005) has also noted that ethnic cleavages become axes of political competition and conflict among groups. The author further argues that cleavages that emerge as salient are the result of the aggregation of all actors’ individual decisions about the identity that will serve them best by emphasising that identity to suit their political ambitions. Thus, ethnicity is only instrumental in that it is used as a facade for political competition in which political actors (politicians, community leaders and political groups) will mobilise ethnic identity for political

interests. Many pastoralist communities in eastern Africa, as our study also found, are products of elite political manipulation used to further political agendas. For instance, we recorded accounts of local political elites campaigning on ‘protection credentials’ that are used as a basis for purchasing arms for groups as a means of stating their ‘unflinching’ support of pastoralist groups in our study communities. Krätli & Swift (1999) also found that political competition exacerbates inter-ethnic and inter-clan violence among pastoral groups in northern Kenya as politicians seek to enhance their reputation and influence by supporting or initiating raids. Several other authors including Van den Broeck (2009), Greiner (2013) and Sharamo (2014) note that local elites and politicians engage and mobilise warrior militias in organised raids against their opponents, sometimes to generate funds for electoral campaigns. They do so through references to ethnic identity, exploiting deep-seated ethnic cleavages among pastoral groups. The argument we present here is that so-called pastoral raids, which are often seen as resulting from environmental scarcity and ethnic differences, are actually not so, but are rather products of identity and elite political manipulation and competition.

Mobilisation theory

Closely linked to the issue of identity politics is the role of mobilisation in organising raids. Groups could mobilise in response to political, social/identity and resource needs. Conflict remains one important need that can motivate groups for mobilisation. We use Etzioni’s (1968: 243) definition of mobilisation as ‘a process in which a social unit gains relatively rapidly in control of resources it previously did not control. The resources might be economic or military, but also political’. Thus raids are organised through mobilisation with the aim of gaining control not only over resources (acquiring cattle wealth), but as a means to political power. The collective action of groups and their array of resources, including material and group cohesiveness (in this case ethnicity), and external support (in this case political support), are important in the mobilisation process (Jenkins 1983).

In Ted Gurr’s (1993) seminal work *Why Minorities Rebel*, he copiously explains that communal groups often have as their focus political mobilisation and action in defence or promotion of their self-defined interests. Gurr (1993: 167) defines group mobilisation as ‘the calculated mobilisation of group resources in response to changing political opportunities’, while political mobilisation ‘refers to a communal group’s

organisation for and commitment to joint action in pursuit of group interests'. Gurr (1993) argues that these groups often mobilise in response to challenges or obstacles posed by other groups; ethnic identity; and grievances or ethnic boundary maintenance (in the primordial and instrumental sense). Groups' mobilisation and their collective action depend on their members' shared interests (for instance ethnicity) and organisation, as well as the opportunities available to them, such as political support (Tilly 1978: 55, cited in Gurr 1993). Etzioni (1968) notes that in mobilisation, existing social patterns are usually supported by a parallel distribution of power, vested interests, social habits and ideological underpinnings, and the actors try to maximise their support of allies. In our case, mobilisation for raiding is supposedly effected through ethnic identity, but political actors implicitly manipulate the raiding process for their political interests. This is why Posner's (2005: 7) statement that 'ethnic groups are mobilised or joined not because of the depth of attachment that people feel toward them but because of the usefulness of the political coalitions that they define – a usefulness determined exclusively by their sizes relative to those of other coalitions' is important here.

It is also worth emphasising the gender and age dimensions of mobilisations. In mobilisations for livestock raids, it is often young males who carry out the raids in groups, which is traditionally conceived as a marker of bravery and 'masculinity' in the community (Spencer 1965; Mburu 2001; Wasamba 2009). Raids carried out are well-organised with the support of community leaders and elders who see a young male as being a proper man once he has helped the community to earn more livestock from raids. Women play no major role in the discussion or organisation of the raids, except in some instances where they cheer the men after successful raids.

STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

Samburu North sub-County (Figure 1) is one of the three sub-Counties that make up Samburu County, one of the 47 counties in Kenya. Samburu North is located in the northern part of Samburu County and borders Turkana, Samburu and Marsabit Counties. It is inhabited by the Samburu pastoralist group, who make up about 78% of its 60,000 population (Government of Kenya 2009). The Turkana communities make up 15% of the population, while the remaining 7% is shared between the Somali, Meru and Kikuyu traders, who are mostly located in

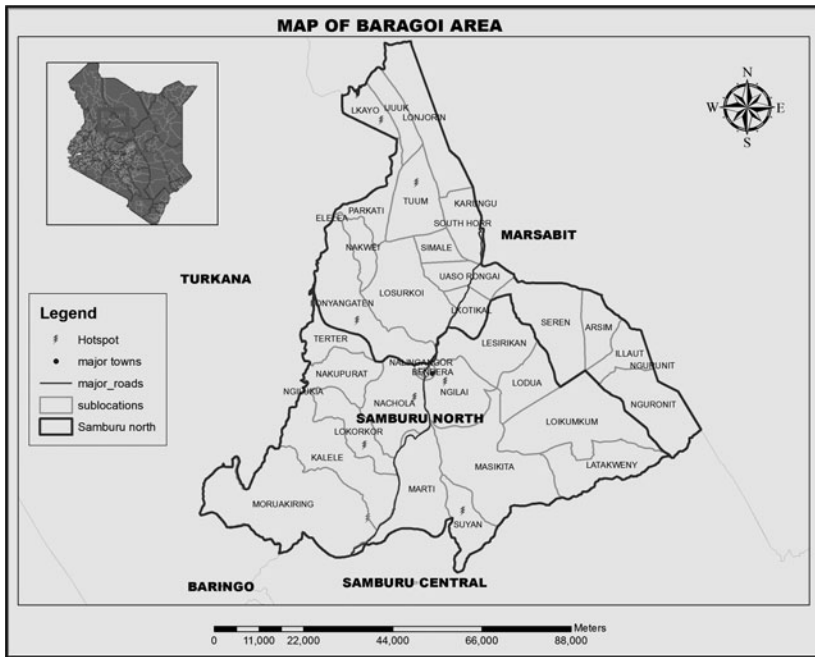


Figure 1. Map of Study Area. Source: Okumu (2016).

Baragoi Town.³ Samburu North sub-County is further divided into two Divisions, namely Nyiro and Baragoi. The population of pastoralists can be found in both Divisions. The Turkana for instance live in Parkati location in Nyiro Division. Similarly, the Turkana used to live in Kawap Centre before they were evicted, through livestock raids, by the Samburu of Uaso Rongai. The Samburu live in Uaso Rongai, South Horr and Loonjorin in Nyiro Division, while in Baragoi Division the Samburu live in Latakweny, Lesirrikan, Tangar, Soito Ngiron, Marti, Suiyan, Bendera, Ngilai and Baragoi town. The Turkana in Baragoi live in Nachola, Logetei, Lenkima, Thuree, Natiti, Naling'ang'or Baragoi town (Leilei), Charda, Lomerok and Marti.

Administratively, the sub-County is served by a Deputy County Commissioner who sits in Baragoi town. He is assisted by two Assistant County Commissioners, in Baragoi Division and Nyiro Division, based in South Horr. Under the Assistant County Commissioners are nine Chiefs representing the locations of Samburu North who work closely with Assistant Chiefs from the various sub-locations. Samburu North sub-County is a semi-arid area with a maximum of 400 mm annual rainfall (Kariuki & Letiya *n.d.*: 11). The temperatures in Samburu North

sub-County range from an average minimum of 24 °C to an average maximum of 33 °C during the dry seasons of November to February (Humanitarian Response 2013). It has two rainy seasons, from March to May and from August to October. The Turkana and Samburu population in Samburu North sub-County are mostly involved in nomadic pastoralism as a major source of livelihood. However, pastoralists are increasingly settling down to more permanent villages, as is the case in Marti Centre, Bendera, Ngilai, Uaso Rongai, South Horr Centre, Parkati, Logetei, Nachola, Natiti, Nalingangor and Leilei villages. The settlement of pastoralist households does not mean there is a dearth of nomadism. *Morans* from these communities spend most of their time hundreds of kilometres away from home in search of pasture and water. Samburu North sub-County is however also noted for its riches in pastureland, especially along the Kawap-Tuum-Nasiischo corridor, which attracts herdsmen from as far as Archer's Post during the long dry season from November to February.

Methods of data collection employed were semi-structured interviews, biographical interviews of young warriors, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), informal discussions and observations. From August 2014, we conducted 102 semi-structured in-depth interviews targeting *morans* and retired *morans* (50), retired Chiefs (8), elders (11), women (11), police officers (6), Chiefs (9) and Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) (7) in Baragoi town, Marti, Natiti, Thuree, Nachola, Bendera, Ngilai, Parkati, South-Horr, Tuum, Lonjorin, Mbukoi, Charda, Kadokoyo, Logetei, Uaso Rongai, Naturkan, Ngoriche, Lenkima and Lesirkan areas (Figure 1) – all Turkana and Samburu communities. Four biographical interviews with notable young raiders and the two retired paramount Chiefs from the Turkana and Samburu communities were also conducted, as well as 11 FGDs with groups of warriors, elders, women and local opinion leaders in Turkana and Samburu communities. During the fieldwork, we also attended formal administrative and community security meetings organised by government officials, popularly known as '*barazas*', convened by Chiefs from the Samburu and Turkana communities as well as by the office of the Deputy County Commissioner of Samburu North sub-County in South Horr, Charda, Lenkima, Ngilai, Marti, Thuree, Baragoi town, Nachola and Ngoriche Hills. Further we visited hospitals to interview victims of violent raids, and attended livestock markets, animal inoculation days, warrior peace meetings, churches, funerals, burials, traditional weddings and *sapana*⁴ events during the field study; we also observed discussions, relationships and transactions between members of the Turkana and Samburu communities. The interview guides essentially discussed

the causes of violent raiding, actors and their roles, and the particular involvement of elites in raids.

Other sources of secondary data included reports and petitions forwarded to the Catholic Diocese of Maralal (CDM) by concerned citizens from Baragoi over the spiralling violence since the early 1990s. Further, we obtained secondary data on violent incidences with a special focus on violent raids from 2005 to 2015 from Baragoi Police Station. These came in the form of Occurrence Book (OB) entries, police signals and police chronology of events. The OBs contain data in the form of daily entries about livestock raids, names of victims, numbers of animals stolen, and the success or failure of recovery efforts by the police. We also obtained project reports from the CDM that are relevant to inter-communal relations between the Samburu and Turkana of Baragoi. Newspaper cuttings covering incidences of raids and massacres, and opinion pieces on the causes of raids in northern Kenya were also collected from the three leading Kenyan newspapers, the *Daily Nation*, *The Standard* and *The Star*. Lastly, we obtained three documentaries on the nature and causes of pastoralist violence among the Samburu and Turkana. *The Samburu State of War*, by NTV5 journalist Nimrod Taabu (2013) in Baragoi; *No Man's Land*, a documentary produced by Jeff Lekupe (2011), a Samburu journalist based in Maralal, which focused on marginalisation and appropriation of pastoralist lands as the root cause of violence in northern Kenya; and finally the *Business of Violence*, a Kenya Human Rights Commission (2009) production that delves into the linkages between livestock raiding and elite entrepreneurship in northern Kenya. These secondary sources of data helped to complement our primary data and brought to the fore historical and statistical information that could not be obtained from the respondents. The main limitations/weaknesses of the study are a lack of inclusion of comprehensive data/statistics on raiding, which would offer a better understanding of the role of raiding in northern Kenya. Despite the lack of statistics, we believe this study presents a new and more comprehensive analysis of the role of elites in pastoralist conflicts in northern Kenya and how the new power elite, created through the devolved governance system in 2013, uses violence as a means of gaining and preserving power.

We use the term *pastoralist elites* to mean politicians, local community leaders, cattle traders/dealers and government officials (Chiefs and retired Chiefs) who all have vested interest in the 'business of raids'. Although in general *conflict* may comprise differences, disagreement, competition or struggle between two groups, or simply the existence

of incompatible needs or interests between two groups in which they sharply disagree, in this study we use *conflict* to refer to violent conflict, which is a form of struggle and mobilisation (of groups) for violent action (Demmers 2012) and the ‘use of physical force that injures, damages, violates or destroys people or things’ (Honderich 2003: 15). *Morans* are young men between the ages of 15 and 30 who after circumcision are charged with the responsibility of protecting communal and household livestock and property. Lastly, *raiding* is used to mean violent seizure of livestock from another community, usually of a different ethnic group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Change in livestock raiding

We now present the change in raiding from a historical perspective using secondary data drawn from historical sources that have documented pastoralists’ relations in northern Kenya. During the colonial period (1895–1963), the whole of northern Kenya was referred to as the ‘Northern Frontier District’ (Khalif & Oba 2013). It was administered through emergency laws that sought to restrict movement of pastoralist groups by creating artificial resource boundaries. In so doing the colonial government inadvertently created a new window of violent confrontation between pastoralist groups, as it zoned off some groups from shared inter-communal resources. Livestock raids from the early 1900s therefore started to become more of a contest over access and utilisation of resources, rather than a means by which pastoralists restocked after periods of drought (Stigand 1910; Lamphear 1976). The need to win contests over resource access brought in new leaders of war; in Samburu North district a Turkana elder⁶ mentioned a man named Nkului⁷ who led the battle to remove Samburu and Rendille herders at Lokorkor. Nkului is one of the earliest ethnic-nationalist figures to emerge out of the Samburu–Turkana livestock raids. According to Turkana elders interviewed, the battle of Lokorkor in 1969 led to the first Lokorkor⁸ massacre, in which 65 Samburu and Rendille herders were speared to death and their animals stolen by Turkana raiders.

Change in the practice of raiding was further evident in the attempts of colonial officers to reduce the interaction of pastoralist groups in Samburu North sub-County. In 1935, the district officer⁹ based in Baragoi, through a letter to the District Commissioner in Maralal, announced that to avoid fights between the Samburu and Turkana,

the Maralal–Martī–Baragoi–Loiyangalani highway would be the boundary that splits the Turkana and Samburu communities. This not only restricted mobility, upon which pastoralists' livelihoods depended, but it also forced Samburu households living among the Turkana to move back to the Samburu side. It drew a red line and contributed to ethnic stereotyping that encouraged enmity. For example, Turkana or Samburu herders whose livestock crossed the road to either side had to forfeit them or use force to retrieve their animals.

According to a KPR officer¹⁰ based in Parkati, *Ngoroko*¹¹ from Turkana County were the first to come to Samburu County with guns. These Turkana *Ngoroko* had earlier acquired guns through trade with the Ethiopians. *Ngoroko* often came through Parkati, which is a Turkana village, and raided the Turkana of Parkati many times. They would then proceed to Samburu villages such as Tuum, Uaso Rongai, South Horr and Loonjorin. The introduction of guns changed the course of livestock raids, as it brought in new actors such as arms traders, and in some way opened up the cultural practice of raiding to other actors who are not pastoralists. In an interview, one resident of Parkati¹² said that his father was given two guns by a Catholic priest in the early 1980s due to the frequent attacks that the Turkana *Ngorokos* were carrying out upon their kinsmen in Parkati. This was a curious change, as livestock raids were never sanctioned against one's own kin. This shows the rebellious nature of the *Ngoroko* and also the independence that the ownership of guns gave to pastoralists' warriors; they did not need to seek the blessings of elders before venturing into raids as was the custom.

In the 1980s, a local Member of Parliament who was also a retired General in the Kenyan Army requested the then President of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi,¹³ to provide arms to the local herders, enrolling them as Kenya Police Reservists (KPR), due to frequency of *Ngoroko* attacks. The whole of north-western Kenya being part of the then vast Rift Valley Province and the political backyard of Moi, he granted the request of the Samburu MP. Villages like Parkati received 40 guns; most of these were semi-automatic weapons such as the MK IV or MKI. The introduction of guns in these villages not only provided much-needed firepower against the Turkana *Ngorokos* but also slowly replaced spears, bows and arrows as a measure of masculinity among Samburu and Turkana men. Using the few security personnel in the area, the KPRs were trained in shooting skills at a hill in Uaso Rongai. This case of providing guns shows the inability or unwillingness of the Kenyan state to provide adequate security to its citizens and points to state weakness in vast pastoralist drylands of northern Kenya.

In sum, several factors have contributed to the changing nature of the practice of livestock raiding in northern Kenya. Changes occurred from the colonial period (1895) when raids were a contest over access to resources, to periods immediately after independence (1963) when restocking of herds became a priority. During the post-independence period (especially from the 1980s through to the 1990s), new actors in the forms of arms dealers, businessmen and political elite leaders became involved in raids, satisfying their economic and political goals by consciously supporting raiding groups (see Osamba 2000). In the present times, as our paper argues, elites' manipulation has played a significant role in driving the changes in raiding, by capitalising on other important factors such as access to resources, economic factors (the demand for beef/meat), and the proliferation of arms. The new actors introduced have been overshadowed by the political elites who have governmental/state power and resources (money) to exact some influence over elders, community leaders and warriors. Their support for these warriors indicates community confidence and trust in them because, according to the warriors, they 'stand by us'. We now describe the roles of various elites/actors in livestock raids.

Complex roles of different actors

Change in the cultural practice of raiding among pastoralists groups in northern Kenya can be attributed to a constellation of actors.

Colonial administrators

The role of elders as custodians of norms and mores of society has diminished in the last century (Leff 2009). The colonial administration system in northern Kenya ignored the role elders played in resolving conflicts. Most of the time, colonial officers demarcated resource boundaries¹⁴ without consulting local elders. Colonial officers also did not understand that pastoralist groups had their own institutions for conflict resolution and mediation. The power and authority of elders to provide leadership, especially in how to conduct raids and still live in harmony among pastoralist neighbours, was therefore greatly diminished by colonial administrators, who literally operated in northern Kenya under emergency laws until the early 1960s (Khalif & Oba 2013). The power of colonial administrators can be seen in their solitary demarcation of the Samburu–Turkana ethnic boundary along a highway: this basically

prevented both communities from accessing grazing lands in Ngoriche, Naagis, Nasiicho, Kawap, Lokorkor, Marti, Charda and Losurkoi areas, all these having been previously designated as inter-communal grazing reserves during periods of drought, and placed under the management of selected elders from the two communities. Thus, the colonial administrators interfered in the traditional process of resource allocation and arbitration, thereby undermining the power of elders to perform these functions. Our interviews with elders also showed that the colonial administrators altered the leadership structures in many pastoralist communities by appointing Chiefs from among their loyalists, thus upsetting the leadership criterion of many of these communities, where authority of the clan was bestowed upon those accepted by all by virtue of their wisdom at crucial junctures of communal history.

Ngorokos from Turkana County

Ngorokos have been described as a rebel group of raiders from the Turkana community who disobeyed elders in their own villages after coming into ownership of guns through trade with pastoralist groups from Ethiopia (Skoggard & Adem 2010). The advent of the *Ngoroko* in Samburu County altered pastoralist relations between the Turkana and Samburu communities. The *Ngoroko* emerged in Samburu around 1965 and grew through the early 1980s (Tablino 2006). The *Ngoroko* attacked mostly the Turkana at Parkati and the Samburu communities in Tuum, Uaso Rongai, South Horr and Lonjorin villages (Mkutu 2005; Tablino 2006). Having the advantage in terms of firepower, as compared with the locals armed with spears, they easily raided livestock and killed many pastoralists including their own Turkana kinsmen. To the Samburu, the Turkana, whether from Parkati or from Turkana County, were declared to be the enemy, and derogatorily referred to as *Lнкуume*,¹⁵ while the Turkana refer to the Samburu as *Ngor*.¹⁶ The seeds of inter-ethnic hatred were therefore entrenched through the actions of the *Ngorokos*. The fact that *Ngorokos* could only raid Samburu villages by approaching from the direction of Parkati led to suspicion that the Turkana of Parkati were probably colluding with their violent kin from Turkana district to raid livestock/cattle and kill Samburu villagers. Thus, the introduction of firearms into the raiding changed the dynamics of livestock raids and led to support being offered by political and business actors in providing arms for raids. Our interviews with elders revealed the *Ngoroko* devastation of Turkana households in Parkati and among Samburu inhabitants of Tuum, Uaso Rongai and

South Horr. This is also corroborated by secondary evidence from Tablino (2006: 75) and Mkutu (2005).

The discussion of the *Ngoroko* highlights the gender and age aspects of mobilisation for raids, which as stated earlier are undertaken by well-organised groups of young men. Sometimes, raids are performed without the support of community elders, but with the support of some elites who want to use the youthfulness of these male groups to achieve their ends – mostly political ones. Raiding also represents the patriarchal nature of the society, and ‘masculinity’ and bravery are considered to be displayed through participation in raids. Lastly, the discussion of the *Ngoroko* shows a shift in raiding, in which community elders are losing their control of and role in regulating/sanctioning raids to the elites who now influence raiding through offering support with money, arms and their discourse.

Independent Kenya government and security officers

Change in livestock raiding can also be blamed upon the attitude and action of independent Kenya governments since 1963. Through the Sessional¹⁷ Paper No. 10 of 1965 (Government of Kenya 1965), the Kenyatta¹⁸ administration deliberately chose to ignore the security and developmental needs of northern Kenya. Given that the *Shifta*¹⁹ war between Kenya and Somalia was fought until the late 1960s, emergency law was extended in all of northern Kenya, restricting movement of people and animals while giving local administrators carte blanche to ignore societal structures in decision-making processes (Rinquist 2011). According to the records from the Kenya National Archives, security officers from this time were involved in ‘communal punishments’. These were security-led exercises in which the police would spearhead a ‘mopping-up operation’ targeting animals from one community to compensate another community that had been raided. The fact that communal raids could punish every herder, including those that had not benefited from a raid by their community warriors, enraged many herders from the Samburu and Turkana groups. This led to revenge raids as disaffected warriors organised themselves and conducted raids to ‘return’ the livestock forcibly taken from them by security forces during ‘communal punishments’.

Chiefs

In the Government of Kenya administration system, Chiefs represent the Office of the President at the village level. Chiefs are therefore

influential in the day-to-day administration of villages. They solve disputes between their people. Given the diminishing role of community elders in the arbitration of disputes within communities, Chiefs are continually playing a more central role, and thus reiterating the role that political elites play in violent raids. In Samburu North sub-County, Chiefs have knowledge of the illegal arms that are found in each household. Chiefs have the power to appoint KPRs. KPRs report to their Chiefs when incidences of raids take place. Raiders cannot enter a village with raided cattle without the knowledge and approval of the Chiefs. In interviews with a woman leader, it was revealed that livestock raids changed when 'Chiefs became thieves'.²⁰ The Chiefs are thus elites with vested interests in supporting raiders to generally gain political capital.

Presence of retired military and police personnel among Pastoralists

Closely linked to the discussion of Chiefs is the question of the roles that trained retired elite military and police play in influencing raids. Just as the colonial administrators for the most part employed pastoralist warriors in their punitive expeditions against resistant ethnic groups like the Turkana (Spencer 1965: 151; 1973: 164; Lamphear 1976; Rutten 1989: 51; Mburu 2001: 156), the independent administrations of Kenyatta and Moi recruited massively from pastoralist warriors who were deemed to be brave and obedient, as required in the disciplined forces. Thus the post-independence governments followed the colonial policy and recruited pastoralists' warriors into the police and armed forces. After many of these were retired from the police and armed forces, they were then absorbed as village administrators (Chiefs). Some of these elite forces indirectly had influence on raids by supporting raiders, and contributed to tremendous change in the cultural practice of livestock raiding. From our own observation, 70% of active village Chiefs and more than 80% of retired Chiefs in Samburu North sub-County were either police officers or military officers.

In interviews with retired Chiefs and security officers, we were informed about how some of these retired officers were crucial in training *morans*²¹ and using their networks to secure arms and ammunition. For instance, General Lengees, who was a retired military officer, became the elected Member of Parliament of Samburu in 1979 and played a significant role in influencing the mobilisation of pastoralists in the area. He also played a role in requesting guns and ammunition for the KPRs in Samburu district. Another clear example is the chief of Tuum²² location, who was a known trainer of warriors, and prepared

them for raids. This was because he was a retired military officer and had the requisite skills and the ethno-nationalistic ideology, through which he justified raiding. Thus these retired police/army officers turned Chiefs are themselves embroiled in the business of raiding, offering both moral and physical support for raids. They influence the militarisation and mobilisation of pastoralist groups in northern Kenya for violent conflicts and raids. The role of military training and its usefulness in pastoralist violence among the Turkana and Samburu of Baragoi was further exhibited in 1997 at South Horr during 'Operation Turkanas Out'. In interviews with retired *morans* and the local catechist of South Horr Parish, it was revealed that 'Operation Turkanas Out' was planned by local politicians but the operation was executed by Samburu *morans* led by an ex-military officer, who also led the torching of Soweto *manyatta*,²³ which belonged to the Turkana. The Turkana were evacuated by the local Catholic priest, who accommodated them within the parish and later organised their relocation to Baragoi, Maralal and Loiyangalani areas. To date only four Turkana families remain in the South Horr area.

Kenya Police Reservists

The KPRs came into being in 1980. According to retired Paramount Chief Joseph Nareng,²⁴ who was the chief of Turkana of Samburu district from 1954, the Turkana had 40 KPRs in Kawap Location alone. The emergence of KPR as a defence force protecting pastoralists' livestock created a new set of actors who had the power of legal arms and ammunition. In the grazing lands, KPRs trained their kin in how to shoot. They mostly used the government-issued ammunition to shoot wild animals such as antelopes and also to scare away lions and cheetahs which threatened their stock. However, KPRs, being warriors, soon learnt that guns gave them the upper hand in raids. KPRs participated in raids and used the guns issued to them for protection to steal their neighbours' stock. Given the interdependent and communal nature of sharing that has existed up until now in pastoralist societies, police records show evidence of KPRs giving out their guns to their kin for raiding purposes. The role of KPRs in livestock raids is captured well in the following statements from police records:

The Officer Commanding Police Post (OCPP) now detains the rifle of one KPR from Marti location. Rifle S/No. MKIV 14244 with 10 rounds of ammunition. It is detained pending ongoing investigations against the KPR. (Baragoi Police Post Occurrence Book 6 October 2008)

To the Post is one Lowasa Lomuria and Lomua Loya all KPRs and hand over a MKIV rifle S/No 360574 loaded with 3 rounds of ammunition which belongs to one Echomo Lokolonyei, a KPR who is under arrest for stealing stock. (Baragoi Police Post Occurrence Book 9 November 2008)

The emergence of KPRs as new actors in livestock raids also entrenched the perception of community members of KPRs as a communal army to be used for defence purposes against common enemies. This has led to the group acquiring guns against other rival raiding groups. Livestock raids therefore transformed from a tool for inter-communal socio-economic interaction into an inter-ethnic show of force. Raiding in Samburu County from the 1980s was not only about acquiring livestock but also evidence of domination by one community on the other. Our findings are in consonance with Mkutu's (2015) study of the KPRs in Turkana County.

Political and business elites

Linked to all the actors above are the political and business elites who are central in influencing raids because of their power and resource-based influence. Several authors, such as Fleisher (2000) and Mkutu (2010), have already emphasised the role that political and business interests play, especially through the supply of arms and money, in exacerbating raids in East Africa and Karamoja Cluster. Our study found that this group plays a very significant role in cattle raids. The role of politics and business interests in livestock raiding emerged in the 1960s but became more pronounced in the 1990s. The death in 1996 of the Samburu District Commissioner,²⁵ whose helicopter was shot down in Nachola area while tracking raided Samburu livestock, pointed to the sophistication of raiders by the mid-1990s (Galaty 2005; Mkutu 2005).

The nature of raids as described by Galaty (2005) and Mkutu (2005) at this time points at business linkages, since most of these livestock were often transported to urban butcheries. The year 1996 was also a period of heightened political campaigning, since Kenya was to hold a General Election in 1997. These election periods often provide platforms for raids. Local Samburu politicians who at that time controlled Samburu County Council are alleged to have sponsored several raids, which included the burning of houses of Turkana villages in Logetei, Charda and Lomerok areas in order to disenfranchise potential political opponents with regard to local council positions. Raiding at this time was used as a means of economic suppression and also as a tool for

entrenching the ethnic hegemony of the Samburu over the Turkana. The next section discusses more succinctly and in more detail the role of political elites in livestock raids.

Livestock raids and politics in Samburu North sub-County

The prominence of livestock raids in the political lives of the elites of Samburu and Turkana can be explained with reference to the Baragoi Massacre of November 2012. In early October 2012, Turkana raiders from Lomerok village attacked Bendera, a village of the Samburu, and stole 501 head of cattle from the Letipila family, who was once a Samburu County Council member. Following this raid, Samburu politicians trooped into Samburu County in several helicopters and ordered the police to go after the Turkana raiders and recover the livestock. Given the bureaucratic nature of police operations, this took some time. The Samburu leaders, led by one powerful Member of Parliament, became impatient and mobilised Samburu *morans* and KPRs from all over Samburu County to launch an attack on Lomerok village to recover the stolen livestock. They did this on 20 October, which was a public holiday in Kenya. The Samburu attacked Lomerok and stole 204 camels as a revenge for the earlier raid, in which 501 head of livestock were stolen. Unfortunately, they lost 12²⁶ *morans*, who were killed by Turkana *morans*. Under pressure from the Samburu political leadership, the police organised for a security operation to recover the initial 501 head of cattle that had sparked ethnic tension between the Samburu and Turkana.

Police officers were seconded from other parts of the Rift Valley to come and participate in the attack on Lomerok. Alongside the police, the politicians, led by the powerful MP, insisted on the Samburu *morans* and Samburu KPRs taking part in this operation. Every participant was paid 10,000 Kenya Shillings (USD 99) by said politician. In the end, the operation failed, as 42 policemen were killed. The fact that 600 Samburu *morans* were camped at the Baragoi DCs compound and were fed using money from Samburu political leadership indicates that the Baragoi Massacre was not an accident: Samburu politicians in this case used the Kenya Police, Samburu KPRs and the Samburu *morans* as pawns in their battle for political and economic interests against their Turkana counterparts. They did this through ethnic mobilisation of warriors and maintenance of patron-client relationships through the distribution of ammunition for raids. In so doing they disenfranchised Turkana villagers on the eve of a general election, just as happened in 1996 when DC Nyandoro was shot down and then a

police operation was launched. Turkana villagers were therefore forced to move out of Samburu North sub-County, with many heading to Loiyangalani in Marsabit. An internal report of the Kenya Police Service after the Baragoi massacre queried the involvement of Samburu politicians in the planning and execution of the police operation in Lomerok.

A second example of the involvement of politicians in livestock raids was the February 2015 incident in the centre of Marti, about 49 kilometres from Baragoi town. The Governor of Samburu County was touring Samburu North sub-County and when he reached Marti, his motorcade stopped at Marti police barrier and the Governor instructed one of his security aides to hand over a box containing hundreds of rounds of ammunition to the police constable manning the barrier. This was a curious incident because even though Kenya has a devolved system of governance the security function remains with the national government. Therefore one wonders where the Governor of Samburu County obtained Government of Kenya ammunition. Besides, the fact that while handing over the ammunition the Governor allegedly told²⁷ the officer to distribute said ammunition to KPRs in the Marti area also raises questions about the procedure of arming KPRs. The Governor has no role in arming KPRs according to Kenyan laws and regulations on security matters. The fact that political leaders can access state ammunition and distribute it in broad daylight to citizens points to corruption within the security apparatus in Kenya and bodes ill for sustainable peace among pastoralists in Northern Kenya given the fact that through the devolved system of governance, local politicians have more financial clout to acquire arms.

The third case of the involvement of politicians in livestock raids is one in which, following the Lomerok operation in November 2013, a Turkana councillor was arrested and charged with organising the Turkana *morans* to attack and kill policemen during the botched police operation at Lomerok. During interviews informants stated that a former councillor who was a retired army officer allegedly trained Turkana *morans* in marksmanship prior to the Baragoi Massacre. This probably explains the fact that no Turkana *moran* was injured or killed despite the huge number of police, KPRs and *morans* who took part in the operation. In an interview with a Samburu²⁸ KPR who survived the massacre, he pointed out that when they arrived at Keekoridony, the Turkana *manyatta* in Lomerok where the raided animals had been hidden, no Turkana warriors were visible, but the raided animals were left in plain sight. Later they realised that the Turkana warriors had

been strategically positioned to attack, as they started shooting the operation party one by one from their vantage positions.

It is worth noting also that livestock raids before and after the eviction of the Turkana of Kawap Centre points to the determination of the Samburu to gain exclusive access to the rich Kawap grazing field which was previously used by the Turkana. Even though the Turkana of Kawap and the Samburu of Uaso Rongai had been raiding each other violently since the mid-1990s, the Turkana raid in Uaso Rongai in January 2013, during which 50 herds of livestock were stolen and 3 KPRs killed and their guns taken, brought to the fore a new dimension of raiding between the two groups. According to police records (Baragoi Police Station 2013) the Samburu warriors in conjunction with the Baragoi town Chief, who is also the brother of the local Member of Parliament, took part in the demolition of Kawap Centre. The *manyattas* at Kawap were burnt and public utilities such as the school, church, water pump, police post and clinic were all vandalised. To date, the Turkana of Kawap live as internally displaced persons in Lenkima *manyatta*, about 9 kilometres from Baragoi town. Interestingly, Schlee (2008) had noted that patterns of conflict in pastoralist areas in Kenya are increasingly influenced by national politics.

Mobilisation of raiders

Elites and politicians continue to play a central role in mobilisation for raids and revenge raids. During the dry season from November to February, several raids occurred after politicians and elites on both sides distributed ammunition to *morans*, especially over the Christmas period. In an interview with security personnel²⁹ in Baragoi town, it was established that some government vehicles, used officially for government-funded projects by political leaders and their aides, were deployed at night to distribute arms and ammunition to *morans*. Furthermore, on 22 November 2014 the killing in Naagis grazing field of an 18-year-old Turkana herder who was apparently selling ammunition to Samburu *morans* heightened tension between the two communities (Baragoi Police Station 2014). There is also evidence that elites from both communities raised funds for purchase of arms and ammunition for subsequent raids (Wachira 2015).

The role of politicians and elites in the mobilisation of raiders can be seen in the Baragoi massacre of November 2012. During this incident, a police officer³⁰ estimated that through the efforts of local politicians 600 Samburu *morans* were mobilised, fed, armed and paid to conduct a raid

in Lomirok village. The level of mobilisation of warriors was further confirmed in a police investigative report on the Baragoi massacre, which estimated the number of warriors to be between 600 and 800 (National Police Service 2013). Similarly, the Turkana, through the local leaders, mobilised for sniper *morans* (with some allegedly having come from the kinsmen in Turkana County). In the advent of the devolved system of government, it was observed that while touring development projects the senior County officials in the area would go to grazing lands to address warriors. It appears curious, to an independent observer, that these politicians never addressed the warriors from the two communities together. They mostly addressed Samburu *morans* in the Samburu language.

Politicians were also blamed for the evacuation of the Samburu of Marti, who had lived cordially with their Turkana neighbours for decades. Given the uniqueness of their relationship the Turkana and Samburu of Marti resisted the temptation to betray each other by sharing information about possible threats from raiders from other Turkana and Samburu villages in Samburu North sub-County. However, a senior Samburu politician intervened, providing lorries and 500 Kenya Shillings per Samburu household to enable their relocation to Morijo, in order for warriors from other Samburu villages such as Suiyan and Ngilai to raid the Turkana of Marti. In an interview³¹ with a Samburu *morán* who led the evacuation of the Samburu of Marti, he stated that they agreed to move because they did not want to be seen to 'disobey their leaders'. This point to ethno-nationalism and its effect on inter-communal relations between pastoralist communities who were in all senses and purposes dependent on each other for security and trade in a volatile area.

Livestock raids in north-western Kenya have become arenas through which constellations of actors build ties and mobilise through politics to achieve their own agendas and interests (see Bailey 1969, 2001; Log 2001). A wide range of actors in livestock raids take advantage of these conflicts for political, financial and other interests beyond the raids. Various actors other than the pastoralists become part of the conflict process leading to violent escalations. Actors would often claim to mobilise primordially, but in reality they are mobilised politically to undertake raids that serve the interest of political groups.

Raiding as state/authority failure

One of the key prerequisites of the state is to provide security for the lives and property of its citizens. In return the citizens are expected to obey the laws and pay taxes (Rothbard 2009). The Kenyan state has failed

fundamentally to provide security and development for the citizens of northern Kenya. The disparity in development in northern Kenya as compared with other parts of Kenya can be seen in its minimal infrastructure, and a lack of adequate social services such as schools and hospitals. In the local parlance the pastoralists in northern Kenya refer to their kinsmen living and working in other parts of Kenya as the ones living in 'Kenya'. Even though the state has improved the security in Samburu North sub-County with police camps in Marti, Nachola, Tuum, South Horr and Baragoi town, raids still take place in broad daylight, as was the case on 19 January 2015 at Baragoi Slaughterhouse³² where the Samburu raided Turkana goat-herders and made away with 200 goats. The Turkana immediately retaliated by raiding 95 goats from Samburu herders next to Baragoi Mixed Secondary School on the same day. The fact that these raids took place about 700 metres from the Baragoi Police Station and Baragoi Command Post of the Administration Police points to the daring nature of Samburu and Turkana warriors and their confidence in their supply of ammunition. It also shows that police officers posted in northern Kenya still believe that raiding is part of pastoralist culture, and that therefore it is acceptable to let it be.

Livestock raids, violent and fatal as they have turned out to be, are still not treated as robbery with violence. The fact that there is no legal framework for classifying livestock raids as robbery with violence points to institutional weakness on the part of the state and its lack of interest in tacking violent livestock raids. Chiefs who have the necessary intelligence from the local level about who the raiders are and where the raided animals are kept often offer to return the stolen animals if there is a real threat of a police operation on their villages, but they never provide information about who the raiders are. Thus raiders are never prosecuted or disarmed, and the vicious circle of violent livestock raiding continue unabated.

CONCLUSION

The practice of livestock raiding has functioned for centuries to sustain pastoralist societies, and has mainly satisfied the interests of elites. However, societal changes such as colonialism and technological changes such as the introduction of guns and the role of open and pseudo-political actors have altered the social structure within which livestock raids are carried out, either to replenish decimated herds or to acquire animals for the payment of bridewealth. In the changing

social context, new actors have continued to emerge in a situation in which pastoralist warriors are continually used as pawns in a game of political and economic domination by one ethnic group over the other. Livestock raids have therefore turned into a tool for expressing ethno-nationalistic tendencies (see Watson & Schlee 2009) as politicians sponsor raids to eliminate and disenfranchise their opponents, while the business elites use the weakness of the state to maintain patron-client relationships with warriors and community members as they seek to gain from the business of selling arms and ammunition. Mention must be made of the colonial administrators' interference in the traditional process of resource allocation and arbitration, and the recruitment of pastoralist warriors into the police and military, which changed raiding by introducing new actors into it.

The newly devolved political system is also seen as having opened up a new front for inter-communal contestations over political power and economic resources (including pasture and water) along ethnic lines among the Samburu and Turkana. In Samburu County Assembly, the Turkana are in the minority, with one ward representative for the entire Turkana population of Baragoi. The Samburu are the majority, holding key positions such as those of the Governor and Speaker of the County Assembly, as well as national positions such as both the Member of Parliament and the Senatorship for Samburu County. The devolved political system, as noted by Sharamo (2014) in his study of pastoralist violence in Isiolo County, is itself a driving factor for violence, as groups compete for political power by organising and mobilising their support based on ethnic identities. Also, with the discovery of oil in Turkana, the ethnic cleavages are likely to end up further divided and become internecine. As with cattle and pastoral raids, oil can be a catalyst for elite manipulation and 'raids' as seen in Nigeria and other resource areas in Africa. The potential for the recently discovered oil in Turkana South to exacerbate conflicts among pastoralists in the area is well captured by Schilling *et al.* (2015: 1182). In their fieldwork in Nakukulas, one of the villages in which oil exploration has been carried out, they noted that chances of outbreaks of violence due to disputes over large-scale acquisition of pasturelands by oil companies such as Tullow Oil³³ was 'significant' (Schilling 2015: 1182). The reduction of pasturelands and their fencing off by oil companies in northern Kenya will most likely limit cattle mobility, thereby also increasing the likelihood of livestock overcrowding, thus precipitating livestock disease outbreaks that eventually motivate the need for raiding to replenish decimated stock. The proliferation of small arms

and light weapons among pastoralist communities in northern Kenya and regional instabilities in neighbouring countries such as South Sudan and Somalia have also been analysed as potential threats to the nascent oil industry in Kenya (Vasquez 2013).

The Chiefs, as local administrators, play a dual role, acting as agents of the government while at the same time supporting their respective communal agendas when it comes to raids. The same applies to some KPR officers. The linkage through patron-client relationships between chiefs, KPRs and local political leaders enables the distribution of ammunition and the bailing out of arrested raiders. This shows that pastoralist elites are involved in violence among the Samburu and Turkana of Baragoi because of the power it gives them through the mobilisation of warriors to conduct raids, especially in revenge cases, as was observed in the lead up to the Baragoi Massacre.

Although pastoralist raids are complex and involved many factors, the role of politics and the political elites in these raids are increasingly significant in changing raids in northern Kenya. Our findings have particularly brought to the fore the salient role of political elites in influencing livestock raiding in northern Kenya. The state/government and NGOs working in conflict resolution efforts must look beyond the warriors/raiders and include other 'hidden' actors, especially politicians, government officials and businessmen, if violent conflict/raids are to be properly resolved. Also, the devolution process in Kenya will need reforms; more powers must be given to counties to become involved in resolution processes regarding violent conflicts by establishing local peace commissions to mediate between raiding factions. As part of these reforms, devolved structures/counties must have control over security in their areas of administration, as security functions are still in the hands of the central government. Our recommendation is for further research into the extent of involvement and the roles played by devolved counties and officials in peacebuilding and conflict resolution among pastoralist groups in northern Kenya. We also recommend studies of the role of local-level elites in exacerbating violent raiding.

NOTES

1. Interview with retired Paramount Chief Loltorono Lakiira of the Samburu at Morning Star, Baragoi, in November 2014.
2. Interviews with security personnel in Samburu North sub-County, December 2014.
3. Personal observation over 10 months in Samburu North sub-County.
4. Initiation ceremony that admits men into the elderly-stage of life practiced by the Pokot and Turkana, in which a man spears a bull. Also called *sapan* or *athapan* (in Turkana).

5. Nation Television, a private TV station that belongs to the Nation Media Group; it is the largest media organisation in East and Central Africa, owned by His Highness the Aga Khan.
6. Interview at Leilei, the Turkana village within Baragoi town, in September 2014.
7. Interview in Samburu North, 2015.
8. Lokorkor is located near Marti centre in Baragoi; it is rich grassland and a famed battleground for conflicts between the Turkana and Samburu. Lokorkor was the scene of a second massacre in 1996 involving the Samburu, Turkana and Rendille, during which the Rendille who had come from Marsabit County were killed and their camels stolen by the Samburu and Turkana.
9. Archival records 1931, Present Policy Regarding the tribes in the vicinity of the Horr Valley, KNA: DC/SAM/3/1
10. Interview with KPR officer at Nakwei on the shores of Lake Turkana, in October 2014.
11. The *Ngoroko* are identified as a rebel age-set that acquired weapons in Turkana County and moved out of Turkana settlements to raid and rape women with abandon (Skoggard & Adem 2010). They describe the *Ngoroko* as an example of the slipping away of culture and a breakdown of the filial relations between fathers and their sons in Turkana society.
12. A resident of Parkati village. His father was a Chief in Parkati in the early 1980s and was the first man in Parkati to own a gun.
13. Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, the second President of Kenya, from 1978–2002.
14. Archival records 1956, Safari Report, to the District Commissioner, Isiolo on Samburu-Boran Boundary, KNA DC/ISO/3/6/35.
15. It is a derogatory word used by the Samburu to refer to the Turkana; it translates as ‘dark and dirty people’.
16. Meaning people who apply different colours to their bodies.
17. Government of Kenya (1965); Sessional Paper No. 10 on African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya, Government Printer, Nairobi.
18. Jomo Kenyatta, Prime Minister of Kenya (1963), President of Kenya from 1964–1978.
19. The Shifta war was fought between Kenya and Somalia. The then Somalia government wanted to claim the north-eastern and some parts of eastern Kenya, where there are Somali Kenyans, as part of Somalia.
20. Interview with a Turkana women’s leader at Baragoi AP Command.
21. *Morans* are the warrior age-set among pastoralists groups, usually between the ages of 15 and 30 years old.
22. Tuum Location is located in Nyiro Division; it borders Parkati, Kawap, Uaso Rongai and South Horr locations within the same Division.
23. *Manyattas* are dwellings of pastoralist households. Most are built by women, as per the norms of the Turkana and Samburu.
24. Joseph Nareng, retired Paramount Chief of the Turkana of Baragoi; interview in March 2015, Natiti village.
25. Said Samburu DC was Mr Joseph Nyandoro.
26. Names of killed *morans* provided by chiefs in Baragoi and corroborated by Baragoi Police records.
27. Interview with a police officer at the Marti Police Operation Camp in February 2015.
28. Interview with a Samburu KPR Officer at Baragoi Airstrip in Bendera village, September 2014.
29. Interview with a police officer in Baragoi town in August 2014.
30. Interview with a police officer in Baragoi town in August 2014.
31. Interview at Marti Centre in October 2014.
32. Personal observation in Baragoi town.
33. More information can be obtained from <http://www.tullowoil.com/operations/east-africa/kenya>.

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