Colonial and Post-Colonial Evolution of Cattle Raids in Tot and Tunyo Divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County; Kenya 1900-2000

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Abstract
This paper analyses colonial and post-colonial evolution of cattle rustling in Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County 1900 - 2000. The general objective of this study was to analyse evolution of cattle rustling in Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County. The study adopted social conflict theory which originates from the works of Karl Marx. The theory argues that relationships between men are shaped by their relative position in regard to means of production that is by their differential access to scarce resources and scarce power. The study employed a case study design. The study used a combination of two non-probability sampling techniques, convenience sampling and snow balling. A total of 140 respondents were selected. The data for the study was analysed qualitatively using descriptive narratives and verbatim forms in systematic themes. The study found that cattle raids have evolved from being a cultural practice into a criminal activity. The researcher concludes that, there is need for the government and other members of the public to work hand in hand in helping to reduce cattle raids menace. The study recommends that the government should formulate and implement policies on conflict management and peace building. Such policies could provide frameworks for understanding the conflict and how to manage them.

Keywords: Cattle Rustling, Cultural Activity, Pastoralism, Agro-Pastoralism

1. Introduction

According to Mkutu (2006), resource-based conflicts, especially cattle rustling have characterized the better part of the History and lives of the people residing in the arid and semi-arid region of Eastern Africa. Mohamud& Pkalya (2006) noted that, intra-state and cross border conflicts are induced by many variables including socio-cultural factors, economic and political marginalization. In Kenya cattle rustling has been a traditional activity among the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, especially in North Eastern and Rift Valley regions of the republic. The National Council of Churches of Kenya (2009) (hereinafter N.C.C.K) indicates that, cattle rustling is an old practice among cattle rearing communities in Kenya and it was regularized by cultural customs. However in modern Kenya, cattle rustling has transformed from being a customary means of livestock restocking where traditional weapons such as bows, arrows and spears were used, to a large scale practice where sophisticated weapons like guns are used.

Fedders and Salvadori (1979) stated that, in traditional society, offensive warfare was carried out by pastoral communities in Kenya, mostly for purposes of reclaiming stolen animals or seizing animals from another group. Killing an enemy was considered unclean and required the sacrifice of livestock for the cleansing of the offending individual. Modern cattle rustling have turned out to be the opposite of what was practiced during the pre-colonial period. This has resulted in a different culture and rationale of raiding in which traditional rules are not observed. This has had a disruptive impact on the normative, structural and behavioral dimensions of the affected communities. Ochieng and Maxon (1992) assert that, at the beginning of the colonial era, the Kenyan pastoral societies were either agro-pastoralists or nomadic pastoralist, having great attachment to cattle and their attitude towards cattle was described as being similar to worship. The accumulation of livestock in pastoral societies was an important form of saving since it acted as a bank from which resources could be drawn to satisfy certain urgent needs like purchasing of grains in time of food scarcity. This has not changed in pastoral communities as they still keep animals as a form of saving, thus cattle rustling is viewed as a way of improving ones economic status or gaining wealth.

The Marakwet being one of the agro-pastoral communities in Kenya are trapped in cattle raids activities. According to Marakwet District Development Plan (2008), the Kerio Valley part

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

The increase of violent conflicts in the Kerio Valley is common and severe especially among the Marakwet, Pokot, Tugen and Turkana. The traditional conflicts which were managed by traditional elders in the communities have turned violent with negative impacts which were not common in the past. From 1970's, violent conflicts involving the Marakwet and the Pokot has had dire consequences on both sides. According to Pkalya et al (2003:48), the impacts of cattle raiding range from loss of human life, livestock, business activities being put on halt due to closure of several trading centers, schools being closed due to low enrolments and flight of teachers.

The NCCK (2001) posited that, Marakwet and Pokot point of dispute is a natural boundary which is the Kerio River. Similar sentiments are echoed by Wako, Daudi, and Akaum (2005), by noting that the Marakwet and the Pokot were forced to agree on the terms of proclamation number 54 of 1924 which was gazetted in October 1925. The Hosking- Buxton Agreement which described Kerio River as the boundary between the two communities was aimed at solving boundary disagreements between the Marakwet and the Pokot. However, the agreement did not end hostilities between the two communities. The conflict continued in the colonial period and the post-colonial era hence shaping the socio economic and political landscape of Kerio valley. The conflict manifest itself in the form of chronic cattle raids and natural resource utilization i.e. pasture and water

Oral tradition has it that, the Pokot, Marakwet, Tugen and Keiyo communities used to raid each other. It is alleged that, the Marakwet reigned supreme due to their unrivalled weapons of poisoned arrows since the Pokot at that time used spears and arrows but with the acquisition of automatic rifles by the Pokot, the situation changed. According to NCCK (2009:6) the

situation changed when Pokot begun to acquire guns from Karamojong in Uganda in 1970s and early 1980s. This was after 1968 Sangutan cattle that had resulted in the death of many Pokot raiders. During the raid, the Pokot going for cattle raids advanced up to the Marakwet escarpment along the deep Kerio Valley. They were massacred with arrows by the Marakwet attacking them from the river banks and it is claimed the Pokot died in hundreds. The Pokot sought guns from the state in the name of home guards to maintain their own security, while obtaining illegal guns from her neighbours the Turkana and Karamojong of Uganda. On their part, the Marakwet resorted to purchase of illegal guns to attain balance in terms of weapons, thus exacerbating the conflict.

The Republic of Kenya in Vision 2030 (2008) observes that, cattle rustling is a practice associated with cultural demands, however it is taking commercial dimension whereby stolen cattle are sold to slaughter houses. It is further witnessed that majority of the conflicts in the country are resource based due to general decline of key resources e.g. land size, water, pasture and increased population which is further intensified by possession of illegal guns in the hands of pastoralists. Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County have always experienced cattle raids. This is due to the fact that the two divisions occupy the Kerio Valley, an area bordering other pastoral communities like the Pokot who attach value to livestock thus they raid their neighbours for livestock. It is against this background that the researcher carried out the study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Cattle raids have always been prevalent in most areas occupied by pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in Kenya. Generally, cattle raids are witnessed in arid and semi-arid lands where the main economic occupation is livestock keeping. The cattle raiding conflict has been a long-standing one in Elgeyo Marakwet County between the people of Marakwet District and the people of East Baringo District. Several factors are attributed to the promotion of cattle rustling in the pastoral areas of Kenya. There is, for example, a plausible linkage between cattle raiding and the deep rooted cultural practices of the concerned communities. Whereas the cultural rationale was valid in the pre-colonial times, a variety of modern factors came into play

in the colonial and post-independence times. It suffices to note that, the underlying causes of the contemporary pastoralist and agro pastoralist conflicts are complex.

1.3 Study Objective

The general objective of this study was to analyse colonial and post-colonial evolution of cattle raids in Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet 1900-2000

2. Theoretical Framework

The study adopted social conflict theory which originates from the work of Karl Marx. Marx understood human society in terms of conflict between social classes, notably the conflict in capitalist society between those who owned means of economic production and those who did not. Subsequent thinkers have described different versions of conflict theory. The common theme is that, different social groups have unequal power and they all struggle for the same limited resources.

3. Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis for this study started from the time of data collection, at the end of the data collection, identification of emerging themes and sub-themes was done in relation to the study objective. Data collected using the two research instruments (interview guide and document analysis guide) was analyzed qualitatively using descriptive narratives and verbatim forms in systematic themes. Data obtained through interviews was analysed and written in form of a story.

4. Discussion of The Findings

The Establishment of Colonial Rule and Manifestation of Cattle Raids in Marakwet

According to Ogot (1973), the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 brought Kenya under the British sphere of dominion and in 1895, Kenya become officially part of British East Africa Protectorate. In 1902 the Eastern Province of Uganda protectorate was transferred to the East African Protectorate, hence become part of Kenya. The colonial government then, introduced the inter-territorial boundaries which included, the white highlands, native reserves, outlying Districts and closed Districts thus, ethnic boundaries helped to intensify ethnic consciousness

among different groups. Osamba (2000:15) argues that, in Kenya, following the establishment of colonial rule, the government adopted policies which contributed to the economic and political marginalization of the pastoral communities by confining them to the closed Districts.

The inter-ethnic boundaries introduced restrictions in terms of movement of people and the concept of trespass together with veterinary services that limited the movement of livestock through imposition of quarantine (KNA, DC/ELGM/1/2). As observed by Osamba (2000), the creation of fixed borders did not only limit free access to grazing land and water, but also increased social conflict among the Africans, since the borders hindered free movement of people and livestock. Colonialism made the relations in the pastoral areas worse because as access to land shrunk and populations of animals and people in restricted areas was congested against available resources, acute competition for water and pasture in settlements became rampant. This promoted conflicts which were mainly resource based, manifesting themselves in form of cattle raids in pastoral areas.

Oral informant indicates that, the Marakwet first encountered colonial administration around 1900's through Baringo. The penetration of the British rule in Marakwet come gradually starting from Kerio Valley part of the District since the Marakwet was pacified from Eldama Ravine (Jacob Kirotich OI 2013). The Marakwet were noted to have resisted the early colonial administrators especially around Kerio valley where colonial penetration started before spreading to other parts of Marakwet. As noted by the District Commissioner (hereinafter DC) Elgeyo Marakwet District, on 30th June 1900, Hyde Baker a colonial administrator from Kampala, established a port on the East bank of Kerio River and named it Ribo currently known as Kolowa. Hyde Baker being very short of grain for his men sent his Sergeant Major and 42 Nubians with a porter to Endo (Marakwet) to gather grains that had been constantly promised by Endo. When his men arrived in a place called Chebilil and there happened to be a marriage feast going on, his *Askaris*(soldiers) were invited for a feast, later when they got drunk, they were massacred by the inhabitants of Endo helped by residents of Sibow, leaving only one porter who was lucky to escape (KNA, DC/ELGM/1/3).

It is further claimed that, the Endo together with natives of Mokoro and Sibow assisted by Cheptulel Suk, besieged Hyde Baker in Kolowa for many days taking all government stock

and inflicting causalities but eventually they were driven off by loyal Njemps from Baringo. There followed a punitive expedition under Captain Gorges, in which the Endo and Cheptulel Suk were punished by burning of huts and seizing of stock but the natives of Sibow and Mokoro were not touched. This led to abandonment of Ribo post (KNA, DC/ELGM/1/3).With the abandonment of Ribo post, the Marakwet were left out of colonial administration briefly but passively administered through Eldama Ravine. In the formative years of colonial administration, the Marakwet were thought to be either Pokot or Keiyo. The DC of Baringo in his report of 1911 on the encounter with the Marakwet wrote that;

> "What I believed is not generally known, that what are known as the Marakwet, Chebleng and Endo are all tribes, the Chebleng as known by the Suk and other adjacent people. Thus the Chebleng who live in the south in a locality known as Marakwet are called Marakwet just as the Suk who live at the Cheptulel are known as Cheptulel" (KNA, DC/TAMB/1/1)

The then DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District Mr. Hosking Buxton noted that, originally the District (Elgeyo Marakwet) was in Uganda. However, no trace of any administration from Uganda could be found together with the rest of the old Naivasha province which was passed into the East African Protectorate in 1902. He further noted that, Elgeyo Marakwet District has been variously administered at various times in History from Eldama Ravine, Eldoret, Marakwet, Kamariny and Tambach (KNA, DC/ELGM/5/1). The DC of Baringo noted in his 1902 Intelligence Report that, the Marakwet were a warlike tribe, that no white man or trader had ever entered their country and that, interaction with the native indicated they frequently defeated the Maasai and Uasin-Gishu when they went to raid them (KNA, DC/BAR/4/1). Oral information indicated that, the Marakwet, Tugen and Pokot raided one another, however there were no trained Moran among the Marakwet though freshly initiated youths formed fighting group that defended the community especially from raiders and other forms of insecurity (Lorkot Joshua OI 2013).

Oral information further reveals that, the entry of British colonialist and subsequent start of colonial period met the Marakwet and their neighbours in their traditional lifestyle with cultural activities such as cattle rustling and interaction taking place. However, livestock raiding

which occasionally strained relations was common between Marakwet and her neighbours (YegonChelangaLongeleito OI 2013). The Marakwet were noted to have had feuds with her neighbours as reported by DC of Baringo in his 1911 report on Chebleng and Endo tribes. He wrote that, a place known as Chepkurom, an excellent grazing ground, much coveted by both Suk (Pokot) and Chebleng (Marakwet), was generally uninhabited owing to mutual distrust felt for each of the three tribes; the Suk , Kamasia (Tugen) and Marakwet due to the constant raids directed to each other among the three communities (KNA, DC/TAMB/1/1). It is evident that livestock raiding was going on among the three communities thus they left a buffer zone to protect their livestock.

Early colonial administrators noted that, bringing European type of civilization to the people of the larger Kerio Valley meant changing settlement patterns and economic activities. It was noted that, Kerio Valley was covered by bush with several impediments to human settlement as captured by DC Elgeyo Marakwet District 1933 who wrote that;

> In general, the appearance of the Kerio Valley floor is huge patches of thick dark bush with muddy brown water of the Kerio or Endo River sinuously flowing down the center and forming the boundary between the two Districts (Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo). Malaria, tsetse fly, drought and subsequent lack of economic system of land cultivation meant that, the valley is uninhabited and uninhabitable by humans and livestock. The valley therefore contains hundred square mile of unproductive uninhabited country. The four "C"s of communication, clearing of bush, control of water and crop cultivation seem to be the main lines of approach to the main problems to render the valley suitable for production and settlement. (KNA/DC/ELGM/1/3)

New crops such as maize, beans, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, cassavas, rice and sugar cane, tropical fruits such as pineapples pawpaw's and bananas were introduced in Marakwet Kerio Valley by colonial administration. This was carried out to rid out hunger that was persistent in the entire Kerio Valley. It was observed by colonial administrators in the area that, in Marakwet, a year rarely passed without there being a shortage of food for two or three months. It was noted that there was no excuse since they (Marakwet) had good fertile soil in the valley and extra ordinary sound system of furrow irrigation, thus their craving to become pastoralist

was to be kept at bay in order to promote crop farming (KNA, DC/ELGM/1/3). Colonial administrators succeeded in turning Kerio Valley section of the Marakwet into productive agricultural area thus, food shortage and hunger was reduced to a great extent however, the problem of cattle raiding still continued.

Modernizing the Kerio Valley residents meant bringing into stoppage cultural practices such as the cattle raids that were not favorable to European type of civilization. According to Massam (1968), the advent of modern government resulted in attempts of putting to an end inter-tribal livestock raids. Massam explains that, in the past, the warriors were always alert on raiding parties foraging for their stock, they were ever ready to make forays themselves whenever opportunity seemed to offer plenty livestock with little fighting. The above is in line with the sentiments of an Oral informant who indicated that, raiding was always motivated by the pastoralists desire to increase their stock. Herds had to be guarded while grazing to protect them from being attacked by cattle raiders. This was, and has been the case in Marakwet to date, where animals are attended by a man *"mosowo"* (shepherd). (James Cheserek OI 2013).

In the early years of colonial period, the cattle raiding activity was a problem that affected both Africans and Europeans in settled areas. The colonial government concentrated on stopping cattle raiding in settled areas more than in the African reserves. In the African reserves, the colonial government concentrated on bringing communities closer to administration and thus the headmen were used to collect hut tax. Cultural activities like cattle raids continued though with some restrictions from colonial authorities stationed in peripheral parts of the reserves such as Kolowa, Tambach and Eldama Ravine in Baringo. One informant indicated that;

> The entry of colonial government did not change livestock raiding so much since the colonial government concentrated on tax collection using appointed village headmen. (Lorkot Joshua OI 2013)

During the first World War, which broke out in 1914, barely a few years after colonial administration had been established in the Kenya, the colonial government shifted its concerns in the colony to the war thereby paying little attention to activities affecting Africans especially cattle raiding in the reserves. During this period, cattle raids thrived in the entire Kerio Valley. It

was reported that there were more than ten cattle raids activities in Kerio Valley involving the Marakwet and Pokot (KNA, DC/BAR/3/1). This prompted the colonial government to separate the Marakwet and Pokot by creation of strict cross border rules.

Several factors were noted to have prompted cattle raids between Marakwet and Pokot during colonial period.It was noted that, the Marakwet had differences with her neighbour the Pokot especially regarding grazing rights around Chesegon River. The Marakwet claimed rights to use the river Chesegon water for farming while Pokot claimed to use the area for grazing. The colonial government in attempts to solve the disputes held a meeting of both tribes. The resolutions of the meeting was that, the water rights of river Chesegon were given to the Marakwet a decision accepted by the Pokot but still triggered periodic conflicts manifesting itself in terms of livestock raiding (KNA, PC/RV/P2/2/2/5).

During the colonial period, cattle raids and murder also brought conflicts and misunderstanding among Marakwet and Pokot. The Annual Report of 1916 on Marakwet sub-District indicates that, relationships between the two tribes were strained due to murder of a Pokot in Kerio valley. The DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District wrote that;

> "Relationship between Endo section of Marakwet and Suk of Cheptulel became strained in April owing to murder of Suk by a man named LosserioarapKababergon, headman of Endo in pursuance of old feud"(KNA, DC/TAM/1/2)

Hostilities between members of the two communities were usually addressed through traditional dispute resolution mechanisms that were instituted by elders of the two communities. Interview with Oral informants indicates that, incidences of murder attracted compensation to the family of deceased. Murder cases were not left to alter the friendly neighbourhood the communities enjoyed but were resolved through traditional methods available like payment of *"lapai"* (compensation),using live animals or farm produce if the mistake was not serious (Jeremiah Yano OI 2013).

During the inter war period, cases of cattle raids in Marakwet were reduced since the Pokot were put under strict surveillance by the colonial government. It is important to note that,

the Pokot have been the main actors of cattle raids in Marakwet, thus the close watch of the Pokot by the colonial government lessened the cattle raids activities directed by Pokot on the Marakwet. According to Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Affray at Kolowa, a traditional Pokot religious leader named Lukas Pkech from Kapenguria led an indigenous Pokot religious movement that was opposed to colonial rule. Pkech had started a pilgrimage comprised of men, women and children towards Mount Elgon. The colonial government pursued them with armed police men, they were found in Kolowo where they were taking their meals, when they learnt they were being pursued, they reacted by carrying branches of leafs as a sign of peace but suddenly has they moved closer to the tribal police, a fight broke out killing four government officers and several Pokot (KNA, DC/ BAR/1/7/2). The colonial government concentrated on security issues in the area by posting more security personnel, thus taming cattle raids to a greater extent.

Witchcraft and honey stealing dominated conflicts between the Tugen, Pokot and Marakwet. The Marakwet were accused of bewitching Pokot land by shooting poisoned arrows towards Pokot land. The Pokot and Tugen on the other hand were accused of harvesting honey from honey barrels belonging to the Marakwet thus causing conflicts between the three communities. As noted by the DC Tambach in his letter dated 24th Dec 1952, he wrote that;

> "I have had further reports that, the Marakwet are continuing to shoot into Tugen and Pokot Shambas to bewitch them. When they were told to stop this activity the Marakwet wanted to fight and started aiming arrows at the Tugen and Pokot who were hunting Hyenas" (KNA, DC/TAMB/3/11/6)

Cattle raids continued in Marakwet and throughout other pastoral areas during the colonial period despite attempts to stop the raids. Towards the end of colonial period in 1950's, cattle raids figures were so high attracting the attention of the then Attorney General in the Kenyan colony. The Attorney General Griffith-Jones E.N noted in his memorandum to DC's in colony, contained in his directive no 2 of 1957 that;

> The theft of stock is on rise, despite continuous attempts to stamp it out; it has remained a constant and difficult problem for the administration. This crime is prevalent in the Rift

> Valley Province. In the past 10 months of 1957, there were 599 cases involving 2,504 heads of stock reported, with cases involving 171 heads of cattle being in the province (KNA, KPNR/2/4/12/13)

There were cases of unarmed cattle raiders who took part in raiding a few livestock away from the planned raiding. In Marakwet, there were some livestock raiders who went under the cover of darkness to steal from the Pokot and Tugen. There were notorious livestock raiders who made their way to East Baringo, one of them noted by the Marakwet was Sepetum. Sepetum was notorious livestock thief and during one unlucky day he was caught and killed in 1957 by the Pokot in East Baringo. According to an informant, the Pokot mounted a massive raid in 1957,it is estimated that over 1,000 livestock were lost as the raiders outnumbered the Marakwet. (KojepkosTomojulia OI 2013).

Transition to Independence and Cattle Raids in Marakwet

The transition to political independence saw a shift from nationalism to the new cult of regionalism (*majimbo*). Politicians and the general public began to look beyond foreground of independence. According to the DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District, the fear of Kikuyu domination and infiltration or invasion of Rift Valley led to a greater Kalenjin solidarity and militant determination to expel as many Kikuyu as possible from Kalenjin territory. The Kalenjin leaders were playing a game of "brinkmanship" to scare the Kikuyu (KNA/DC/ELGM/1/392). Elgeyo Marakwet leaders supported the Kenya African Democratic Union (hereinafter KADU) proposal for regionalism from start and the result of the 2nd Lancaster House Conference in March was claimed a success for KADU. It was further observed by the DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District in his 1962 Annual Report that, there was growth of political consciousness in the District, he wrote that;

> The Elgeyo Marakwet Independence Party remained the only registered party in the District. In the north, the West Kalenjin Congress, an alliance of Pokot, Sebei, Elgon, and Marakwet was registered in Kitale and became the voice of the Marakwet. It demanded the split of the District (Elgeyo Marakwet) into Keiyo and Marakwet (KNA/DC/ELGM/1/392).

The demand for the split of the District into two seemed to stem from the feeling of unbalanced representation since there was constant friction between the Marakwet and Keiyo due to the lack of senior Marakwet staff in the District. The feeling among the Marakwet was that, they were not getting a fair share in matters of money, service and assistance by government although no cases of actual conflicts in terms of cattle raids or open conflict were reported. On the other hand as observed by DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District, stock theft on the Lelan (border between Marakwet and Pokot) continued with fair amount of collusion between the Marakwet and Pokot raiders who fed on the loot thus, giving relations between Pokot and Marakwet friendly, at least on the highland side of the District (KNA/DC/ELGM/1/7 1959). Oral interview indicates that, the Kerio Valley part of Marakwet experienced cattle raids pitting the two communities collaborating on the highland side of the District. To curb cases of cattle raids in Tot division, a police post was created in Tot which supplemented tribal police presently known as Administration Police (Joshua Lorkot OI 2013).

According to DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District, the attainment of independence and availability of land in settled areas, formerly occupied by white settlers, saw residents of Marakwet move out of the District to take up large scale farms in settled areas of Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia (KNA/ ELGM 1964 Annual Report). Oral informant indicated that, the well-off Marakwet residents left the semi-arid Kerio Valley part of the District to settle in flat and fertile areas of Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia, partly to escape from cattle raids prone areas of the District (Kaino Kanda OI 2013). Cases of stock theft continued to be witnessed throughout the Kerio Valley part of the District as it was the case in pre-colonial and colonial state. The DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District noted in his 1961 Annual Report that, inter-tribal friction still occurred at Chesegon, where the Marakwet refused to allow the Pokot to take water from River Chesegon for irrigation purposes (KNA/DC/ELGM/2/9).

The DC of the then Elgeyo Marakwet District reported that, the Marakwet- Pokot border dispute over the Chesegon water feud had been going on since 1959 when the DC of Kapenguria had expelled some Endo from Sowero in west Pokot. When Endo Marakwet left, they closed down furrows watering Sowero from Chesegon since they were traditionally controlled by Endo families. The division of Chesegon water remained a perennial problem on the border between

the two communities (KNA/DC/ELGM/1/392). Inter-tribal relations between Marakwet and West Pokot continued to be strained. It was further noted by DC Elgeyo Marakwet District that, the main problem of the two Districts was stock theft, even though the police had done their best to stop the crime, it was on the increase. This was due to the fact that, the western end of the District was policed by one outpost under Kitale, thus being far away and unable to address the security issues adequately in the vast area (KNA/DC/ELGM/8). Oral informant indicated that, with the independent state, cases of cattle raiding did not change instead it worsened due to inadequate security personnel posted in the area (Paul Kisang OI 2013).

According to Oral information, Sangutan encounter of 1967 that the Marakwet referred to, as *"BoryopSangutan"* which loosely translates to Sangutan war, was the last cattle raid directed by Pokot on Marakwet soil using traditional weapons. The subsequent cattle raids involved usage of guns and other modern weaponry. Traditionally, the Marakwet were superior on arrows and bows during 1960's against the Pokot raiders who used spears, however after the 1968 clash in Sangutan, the Pokot resorted to acquisition of modern firearms. Pokot are reported to have told the Marakwet "we are resorting to *"chepocheptai"* (the guns). From Annual Reports on Elgeyo Marakwet District, there were minimal cases of cattle raids experienced in Marakwet Kerio Valley from 1968 through to 1975. There was state of calmness which gave room for social economic activities to thrive well but the situation changed in 1975 when cattle raids became persistent causing great disturbance. As reported by Ogol, the DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District in his Annual Report of 1976;

> The Kenya Police and Administration Police (hereinafter AP) were kept busy throughout the year in the northern area (Tot), where Ngoroko menace had hit so badly. The stationing of General Service Unit (hereinafter GSU) in the area ameliorated the situation. Apart from fighting the Ngoroko bandits, the force was involved in recovering of stolen livestock in the same area and neighbouring Districts. The stationing of GSU platoon at Tot and AP's deployed, certainly minimized attacks (KNA, ELGM/1976 Annual Report)

Oral informant indicated that, the cattle raiding activities continued in several parts of Marakwet Kerio Valley for example Kotut, Tot and Chesongoch with *Ngoroko* (Pokot raiders)

using guns despite the presence of GSU officers and subsequent installation of GSU station in Tot (Jacob Kirotich OI 2013). To address the problem, the government launched a disarmament exercise named "operation *bunduki*" in 1979 to address the insecurity issue. The DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District reported that, *Ngoroko*activities in northern division (Tot) were greatly reduced due to the fact that, the then president, Daniel arap Moi led crusade against the menace in a joint operation known as "operation *bunduki*". This was carried against the Turkana, West Pokot and areas along Baringo District in the month of October 1979 leading to the recovery of fifty homemade guns (KNA/RVP/B/2/19). However cattle raids in Marakwet, especially Kerio Valley part of the District still continued in 1980s, worsening in 1992 when the entire Marakwet Kerio Valley experienced severe raids directed on them by her neighbours the Pokot. Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County continued to be on the receiving end from cattle raids activities especially in the last decade of the 20th century and the early years of 21st century which witnessed deathly cattle raiding in Chesongoch.

Acquisition of Fire arms in Marakwet in 1993 -2001

According to NCCK (2001), the Kenyan border from Kismayu, Mandera, Lokichiogio and Kisumu is a porous region through which guns are slipping in without much trace. It estimated that up to 11,000 guns are sold in the Kenyan black markets every year as of 2001. The entry of the guns to Kerio valley is attributed to the menace of cattle raids. As noted earlier, virtually all the communities residing in the larger Kerio Valley used traditional weapons such as spears, shields, arrows, bows and swords. Political instability in neigbouring countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan contributed to infiltration of Small Arms and Light Weapons (hereinafter SALW) to border communities such as Turkana, Pokot, Somali among others. Marakwet being at the center geographically got subjected to cattle raids from her neighbour the Pokot who used guns in attacking them away from traditional weapons. Marakwet being agro pastoralist community resorted to acquiring guns for purposes of defending their livestock from raiders. This is captured from the narrative of an informant who noted that;

> "Our major preoccupation has been to cultivate our farm using the water that flows from the highland areas of the District through the escarpment. However, with the continued

cattle raids that did not favour farming, we resorted to acquire fire arms for self-defense and protection of our animals from cattle raiders". (LomutokamarRwatum OI 2013)

Though the Marakwet and Pokot usually conflicted over cattle raids, it did not interfere with the sale of fire arms. Cheserek, Omondi and Odenyo (2012), argue that, it was the Pokot who sold guns to the Marakwet with the market price of used AK 47 and G3 riffles going for Kshs 30,000 and 60,000 respectively and ammunitions at Kshs 1500 per magazine. Oral information indicated that, early in 1990's the value of a gun supplied by Pokot was 10 cows and a round of ammunition retailed at fifty shillings (RiongotanyTaimoi O.I 2013). Oral interview reveal that, the Marakwet bought guns from some Pokot who are relatives to the Marakwet and friends they met in Chesegon market.

According to oral information, the Marakwet acquired the first guns in 1993. This was acquired from some Pokot businessmen who were motivated to earn through the sale of the weapons (Jacob Kirotich OI 2013). The sale of the guns to the Marakwet seems to have been motivated by the fact that, the Pokot acquired the guns at a cheaper price from the Turkana and their neighbour the Karamojong of Uganda.Mkutu (2006) observed that, pastoralists may acquire arms through raids and attacks directed to them or the raids they conduct on their neighbours. A study revealed that there are about 17-20 illicit arms in every sub-location in Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County. In total, there are over 1,068 illicit arms in the hands of the Marakwet in the entire District (Mohamud and Pkalya 2005:49).

Table 1 Estimated Number of Illegal arms in Tot and Tunyo Divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County by 2005

Divisions	Number of AK47 rifles	Other light weapons	Sub machine guns
Tot and Tunyo	56	224	10

Source: MohamudAdan and Ruto Pkalya (2005)

5. Conclusion

The entry of colonial rule met the Marakwet in their traditional lifestyle with cattle raids being practiced as a cultural activity. The factors that are noted to have promoted cattle raids in

Marakwet during colonial period still spread to post-colonial period as the colonial government least addressed them. The post-colonial period witnessed the entry of modern weaponry such as the guns which have intensified cattle raids activities. The acquisition of guns by residents of Tot and Tunyo division of Elgeyo Marakwet County was necessitated by the fact that, they did not match the cattle raiders from East Baringo who always directed raids on their livestock, thus they resorted to arming themselves to counter the cattle raiders.

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