The Nexus between Cattle Rustling and Peace Initiatives between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda

Timothy Kitui Wanyonyi, Masinde Muliro University of Science & Technology, Kenya

Abstract

Finding a permanent solution to the recurrent Kenya-Uganda cross border conflicts through cross border peace initiatives has been a tall order for the stakeholders. Despite sustained efforts to alleviate cattle rustling by the governments of Kenya and Uganda, IGOs, NGOs, FBOs and other non-state actors, cattle rustling between the Karamojong of Uganda and Turkana of Kenya communities is still on the rise. The objective of the study was to analyze the nexus between cattle rustling and peace initiatives between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda. The study was carried out in North-Eastern Uganda and North Western Kenya. The two areas are occupied mainly by the Turkana and Karamojong’ communities respectively and commonly referred to as the Karamoja cluster. This study adopted the descriptive survey and co-relational research designs. The target population for the research were: permanent resident members of the Turkana, and Karamojong’ communities in North-Eastern Uganda and northern Kenya, NGOs and IGOs dealing with Peace initiatives in the zone, the zonal and provincial administration, Senior police officers from both communities, the ministries of foreign affairs for the two countries. The researcher collected data using questionnaires and interview schedules. Focused Group Discussions and secondary data from published books, documentaries and journals were also a major source of information in this research. Descriptive data analysis and spearman rank correlations were done by Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Key words: Cattle Rustling, Peace Initiatives,

1. Introduction

Despite sustained efforts to alleviate cattle rustling by the governments of Kenya and Uganda, IGOs, NGOs, FBOs and other non-state actors, cattle rustling between the Karamojong and Turkana communities has been on the rise. In September 1997, fifty Turkana were killed in a 4 a.m. raid by a combined force of Kenyan Pokot and Ugandan Karamojong’ communities numbering one thousand. The Pokot-Karamojong alliance was armed with AK 47 assault rifles and stole 7,000 cattle (Cattle Weekly Review, 1997).

In March 1999, one thousand Pokot gunmen from Kenya attacked a Turkana village killing 30 people before escaping with 2,000 heads of cattle. Five months later, the Turkana living in Kenya formed an alliance with the Karamojong’ in a raid that massacred 140 Dodoth of Uganda. What was most disturbing was the fact that the Turkana-Karamojong’ alliance burned food crops; gang raped women, set huts on fire and threw seventy children into the flames. Later, an attack in February 2000 by the Ugandan Karamojong’ on Kenyan Pokot killed one hundred people and stole 1,800 cattle and 5,000 sheep (BBC Online, 1999).

Warigi (2000) reiterates that the psychological and economic impact of such devastating raids and blood shedding cannot be overstated, yet, neither Kenyan nor Ugandan governments have taken action to stop the menace. The complexity of cross border conflicts between the Turkana and the Karamojong’ communities pose a challenge to conflict analysis and management. Conflicts do not involve an entire group within either country, but one particular clan of Karamoja in Uganda against one particular section of the Turkana of Kenya. It may at any one time be the Jie against Kwatela, the Dodoth against the Lukmong, the Matheniko against the Woyakwara, or the Ngisonyoka against the Pokot. Each of these paired sections share frontiers.

The problem of violent conflict and insecurity in the Cluster causes great concern to the Governments of Kenya and Uganda and the pastoralists themselves. Although conflict has been characteristic of the region for decades, the current trends, patterns, and scope are worrying and need to be addressed. The intensity of conflict in the region has wreaked severe and far-reaching havoc in society. As a result of conflict, many livestock, people, and property have been lost or destroyed. These conflicts leave many people impoverished, with reduced options for alternative livelihoods, and such conflicts increase the likelihood of further clashes and instability in the Cluster. The Intermediate Technology Development Group- East Africa (ITDG-EA) and the CAPE
Unit of the African Union’s Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR) have facilitated a series of meetings dealing with conflicts between the Karamojong’, Turkana, and Pokot along the Kenya-Uganda border.

While many of these have been small community dialogues between two or more specific communities in conflict, two large-scale meetings have been held. The first was held in Mbale, Uganda in 2001, and the second in Lodwar, Kenya in 2002. These meetings were intended to follow up on decisions that had been made and to further the dialogues along the Uganda-Kenya border. A study by Mburu (2001) showed that arms race amongst the Turkana, Karamojong’ and their pastoral neighbours is motive for bonding and raiding in the belief that there is security in numbers. He added that cattle rustlers were well armed and operated in such large numbers that regional governments are reduced to ineffectual witnesses of low-intensity ethnic cleansing. A few randomly selected incidents illustrated the severity of the problem. This called for a study that will analyse the causes of cattle rustling between the Turkana and Karamojong’ communities and evaluate the existing cross-border peace building strategies with an intent to address persistent cattle-rustling conflict in the region.

2. Research Design

This study adopted descriptive survey and co-relational research designs. Descriptive survey examined the nature of cattle rustling between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda and evaluation of the challenges facing peace initiatives between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda whereas co-relational research design analyzed the nexus between cattle rustling and peace initiatives between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda. Descriptive survey research design systematically described a situation, problem or a service or provides information about, for example a living condition of a community. A descriptive study is concerned with determining the frequency with which something occurs or the relationship between variables (Moore and McCabe, 2006). Descriptive studies usually involves large samples and in this case, the researcher looked a random sample population for the study. The design is appropriate as it described the state of affairs as it exists (Kombo and Tromp, 2006), in this case the nature of cattle rustling and the challenges posed on peace initiatives among the Turkana and Karamojong’ communities.

In this descriptive study, the researcher utilized observation, interviews and survey. Surveys are efficient in that many variables can be measured without substantially increasing the time or cost. Co-relational research design on the other hand, a correlational study refers to a quantitative method of research in which you have two or more quantitative variables from the same group of participants, and you are trying to determine if there is a relationship (or covariation) between the two variables (that is, a similarity in pattern of scores between the two variables, not a difference between their means). Dr. Janet Waters 2017.

2.1 The Study Area

The study was conducted along the Uganda-Kenyan border (figure 3.1). The targeted area included all the three districts of Karamoja in Uganda, namely Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit, but was confined to four outlying sub-counties of Dodoth, Jie, Matheniko and Pokot on the border points of Kenya and Uganda. These are the most hit regions in the study area. In Turkana, Kenya, the study covered two divisions of the County, namely Lapur and Lomelo. Of these two Kenyan divisions, Lapur experiences conflicts of a cross-border nature, and Lomelo experiences intra-country conflict along the boundaries with the Pokot areas of Kenya. Ruto et al., 2013.

2.3 Target population

The target population includes; household heads from Karamojong’ and Turkana communities to know the effects of cattle rustling on peace building initiatives. According to National Population and Housing Census 2014 by the Government of Uganda, the Karamajong comprise 782,000 people of the Ugandan population. Out of this population, averagely 87,614 people occupy that three districts along the Kenya-Uganda border coming from averagely 9,734 households. The study will also target IGOs, NGOs and FBOs involved in cross-border peace initiatives. Key informants from the administration were the following: area DCs (for the 3 districts in Uganda) and the administrators of the 4 sub-counties in Kenya, all from Karamoja Cluster The study also targeted senior police officers from Karamoja Cluster, village elders from Karamoja cluster.

2.4 Sample size and Sampling procedure

2.4.1 Sample size

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), when the study population is 10, 000 and above, a sample size of 384 is adequate. This is arrived at using the following formula:

\[
n = \frac{Z^2pq}{d^2}
\]

Where,
n = desired sample size (if the target population is more than 10,000)
Z = the standard normal deviate at the required confidence level
P = the proportion in the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured
q = 1 - p
d = the level of statistical significance set

It was intended that the results of the study would have 5% level statistical significance and confidence level of 95%. The Z value at 95% confidence is 1.96.

\[
n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.50) \times (0.50)}{(0.050)^2}
\]

= 131 respondents

Therefore the sample size consisted of 131 respondents; however the researcher came up with 160 questionnaires to cover for losses due to spoilt questionnaires and non-response.

2.4.2 Sampling Procedure

The study adopted multistage random sampling. Key informants were purposively sampled to join the sample that was interviewed. The research engaged a snowball sampling method to collect information from cattle rustling victims.

2.5 Data Collection

Collection of primary data was done using pretested and coded questionnaires and focus group discussions which were used to obtain information from youths, area advisory committees. Interview using interview guides were conducted to the Key informants. Systematic observation and photographs were also used in the collection of primary data. Secondary data was obtained from records going back eight years from the following institutions; at the NGO level; AU/IBAR, ITDG-EA, REDSO, TLPF, UNDP; Human Development Report Office, the World Bank’s Arid and Semi-arid Lands Resource Management Programme (ALRMP) and at state level, the ministry of foreign affairs Kenya, the Ministry of internal security Kenya and the Ministry of foreign affair Uganda.

2.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Validity is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Kothari, 2004). It is therefore the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The instrument must be relevant with respect to the content as expressed by the research question (Kim, 2009). Validity in research may imply construct validity, content validity and criterion-related validity.

Construct validity was achieved by review of theoretical and empirical literature while content validity of the tools was achieved by a pilot survey (Saunders, et al, ibid). Face validity was achieved by matching the questionnaire with what is contained in the conceptual framework. The researcher also ensured that there are carefully designed directions for filling the questionnaires (Kothari, ibid) and also brief the key informants.

Reliability is the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Cronbach’s alpha will be used to test the reliability of the data. It simply provides an overall reliability coefficient for a set of variables by determining how items correlate among themselves (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The researcher consulted his supervisors and other experts in the area of study that helped to improve the content and quality of the questionnaire. The tools were validated by the supervisors and experts from the school of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance.

3. Results

3.1 Peace Initiatives between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda

Table 1 indicates majority of respondents (90.0%) have not participated in initiatives seeking to restore peace in the region. A look at Table 5.2 indicates most of the respondents (91.5%) indicated that they would have loved to participate in cross border peace initiatives. People can attribute this outcome to the inherent feelings of mistrust and the tendency to express hostility to each other from both communities. The fact that only 8.5% of the respondents have shown a negative attitude towards peace initiatives means that the state has goodwill from the locals. This creates avenues for the leadership in this region to formulate plans and programs that will foster good neighborliness among the neighboring communities.
Previous peacemaking efforts have been concentrated on the surface factors driving the conflict between Turkana and Pokot communities, which I argue are actually symptoms of a much more systemic conflict model. One attempt at peacemaking focused on the communities themselves. The focus was placed within pastoral communities to forbid raided livestock from being retained by the actors conducting the raid. Furthermore, women stolen during raids could not be taken on as brides of the raiders (Krätli and Swift 1999).

Another peacemaking effort aimed specifically at community solutions to Turkana conflicts enjoyed some successes. However, Grahn and Akabwai (2005) note that communal solutions are not effective at solving systemic problems within a conflict.

Peacemaking efforts at the macro-level have encountered problems as well. One author explains that state-led peacemaking initiatives often fail due to corruption, lack of legitimacy, low resources, and ultimately institutional weakness. In a government in which ethnic politics are deeply embedded, attempts at mediating ethnic conflict disputes tend to exacerbate social tensions (Mahmoud 2011). Groups see government action as a continuation of ethnic biases and thus respond to mediation attempts in the same way as they do livestock raids – by polarizing defense along their own communal identity. It is also apparent from Figure 5.3 that people from the Turkana community show a higher propensity of participating in cross border peace initiatives that those from the Karamojong community. This can be attributed to the findings reported in Figure 5.3, showing that the Turkana own more heads of livestock than their Karamojong counterparts do. This means they stand to lose more whenever raids are conducted.

Some of the peace programs that the residents were aware of included the sharing of pasture and watering points, intermarriages and engaging in sports activities. The results show that the state and other stakeholders need to invest more resources in promoting and implementing peace activities across the borders. 98.5% of the respondents indicated their support for the ongoing peace initiatives, stating that the respite from psychological torture and economic disengagement was a welcome relief from the agony of their daily practices.

It was also noted, that participating in joint activities creates awareness about the different cultures to members of each community. It is hoped that continued appreciation of the existing cultural differences will bring about a reduction in the number of raids by members of these communities. Previous attempts have all fallen short on their mandate to instill sustainable peacemaking efforts. I argue that these attempts have failed due to the fact that they focus on symptoms of negative reciprocity rather than trying to interrupt the conflict spiral. Similarly, initiatives have often focused only on one track of diplomacy, such as the local or state level. By narrowing the scope to one track, the negative pull of the conflict model simply gains traction in other areas that are not being focused upon. These past attempts seem to point to the need to instill both multi-track diplomacy initiatives as well as some sort of peacemaking, which involves reducing negative reciprocity.

Attempts at reducing access to small arms have often similarly failed in the past. Kenya itself has a regionally strong stance against small arms proliferation. These weapons are largely outlawed within the state. However, the local incentive to maintain

Table 1 The Number of People Who Participate in Cross-border Peace Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>131</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher, 2018

From Table 2 it is clear that women were more likely to participate in cross-border peace initiatives as compared to their male contemporaries. This happens because it is the women who bear the brunt of these raids. They are often left to preside over families after the demise of their husbands and sons. Without proper empowerment, most of these women are forced to endure economic hardships, in addition, to the psychological torture they undergo. It therefore follows, that they would be more inclined towards the peaceful resolution of these challenges in a bid to reduce the risks associated with raids and rustling.

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weapons trade exists due to pastoral conflict. Thus, weapons are purchased from neighboring states with more lenient weapons policies. The Regional Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) has already sponsored the destruction of over 100,000 small weapons (Lamb & Dye 2009). The effectiveness of such projects is often questioned, however. High costs of undertaking such large efforts mean that the destruction of weapons themselves is often dependent upon external sources of funding. In this situation, the government is not a stakeholder and thus has little incentive to partake.

Scholars note the continuing spiral of an influx of illicit arms and the ensuing destruction (Lamb and Dye 2009; UN Office for Disarmament Affairs 2011; Mkutu 2008).

3.1.1 The Role of Civil Society

According to USAID and FEWS NET (2005), civil society interventions in peace building began in earnest only in recent years. Before then, matters of security and conflict resolution were mainly viewed as a government domain as the state moved to exert its power through military purges of the “errant” communities. With time however, it became apparent that peace building and the resolution of conflicts was not just a matter of maintaining law and order but that it had a socio-economic dimension to it in view of altered livelihoods, displacements, and the wanton loss of lives and property. This realization is what led governments to start tolerating civil society interventions which at first began with religious institutions. Civil society organizations in the pastoralist districts dwell mostly on facilitating and conducting peace dialogue meetings between communities as well as on advocacy for pastoralist issues intended for the national and regional platform. Other interventions currently being undertaken by the civil society include conflict early warning and the recovery and return of stolen livestock.

3.1.2 Role of Community and Community Structures in Conflict Dynamics

As Turkana and Pokot raiders are part of the respective community, their decision on whether to raid or not is influenced by other community members, particularly elders, women and chiefs. However, their role in raiding is ambivalent.

In the short term, the community usually gets a share of the acquired livestock, especially after a successful adakaror mass raid. In the end, however, the community suffers from the negative effects of the conflict. Every community should be largely responsible for its own peace. As discussed above, traditional authority and power among many pastoralist communities still rests with the elders to some extent. They make decisions and pass judgment on issues such as forming relationships with other groups and declaring war. During wartime, the elders furnish the raiders with blessings. The elders sometimes encourage conflict when they accept rewards or bribes from the youth. Though they encourage youth to participate in livestock raiding, the elders are very instrumental at advocating for peace, recovery of stolen livestock, and compensation of innocent people murdered. Elders usually negotiate for peace, settle internal disputes and are willing to act as emisaries of peace with other groups. However, their influence over livestock raiding and peace building is sometimes compromised when they are given part of the lootings by the youth.

3.1.3 Women and Conflict

Conflict among pastoralist is indiscriminate and affects all people. Women and children are generally the most affected because they are vulnerable and defenseless, they are not in a position to feed themselves, they can lose loved ones (spouses, parents and sons), and they are easily made homeless and turned into refugees. The pastoralist’s women play a significant role in the conflict environment both negatively and positively.

The government deploys General Service Unit (GSU); Anti Stock Theft Unit (ASTU); Administrative Police [AP] and Regular Police whenever cattle rustling takes place but cattle rustling still persists in the area affecting children schooling. This approach of conflict resolution has three weaknesses; one the officers lacks coordination particularly when a raid occurs, second is that officers are less armed compared to cattle rustlers who have sophisticated weapons and thirdly is whether the security officers should shoot at raiders who are citizens (Kimenju et al. 2003). These weaknesses make the security officers insufficient in curbing cattle raids and its associated impacts to residents of Marigat district. The government also organizes occasional security operations in the North Rift aimed at confiscating illegal arms from citizens. However, these operations have failed because residents are intimidated in the process. The government has also used tactics of declaring amnesty to those willing to surrender guns.

The key informants of the data collection process, who were drawn from high-ranking members of both communities, echoed these sentiments. They included government officials, NGO and IGO delegates and other high profile stakeholders in the peace process across this border between Kenya and Uganda. It is evident from these findings, that there is a strong connection between cattle rustling and peace initiatives within the region. This is because political leaders, area youths and other stakeholders conduct cattle rustling initiatives in a bid to enhance their economic fortunes. From these respondents, it was clear that most of the community members in both the Turkana and Karamojong region live in abject poverty.
This means that most of the youths have to organize themselves into gangs and conduct raids in order to get animals that they will sell on the market and earn a livelihood. Peace initiatives are a source of livelihood for most of the people living in these communities. This is because most of them have been employed as peace actors in the different organizations that are operational within their communities. Consequently, the main benefit that participants draw from participating in such initiatives is monetary in nature. This also explains the overwhelming support (98%) for peace initiatives by members of the community as seen in Table 12 above. It also explains the prodigious desire by most of the community members to participate in peace initiatives within the area.

Personnel working in the NGOs and IGOs within the region underscored the need for perpetuating peace initiatives within the region. To them, the programs are currently under-funded, a fact that impedes their ability to organize and execute peace building programs in the area. Most of the key informants opined that the existence of NGOs in the area was dependent on continued rustling activities. This means that most of these organizations terminated their operations whenever rustling ceased. In addition, the amount of fiscal resources that were disbursed to these entities was also determined by intensity of cattle rustling activities within the region. Consequently, the NGOs and IGOs maintained peak level operations during times of great unrest. This means the relevance of peace actors within the region was dependent on the perpetuation of cattle rustling. It therefore draws into question the effectiveness of the programs initiated by these actors and the level of cooperation they receive from other stakeholders in their quest to end cattle rustling.

3.2 Cattle Rustling and Peace Initiatives

The results also indicated that most of the respondents do not agree with the peace initiatives as presently structured. This is attributable to the fact that raids and rustling initiatives have persisted in spite of repeated interventions by the relevant stakeholders with a view ending the problem of cattle rustling. In support of this finding, Pruitt et al. (2003) offer several types of integrative solutions, two of which are found to be directly inapplicable to the conflict situation between Turkana and Karamojong communities. Pastoral conflict in Kenya indeed maintains conflict symptoms due to access to resources. One posited solution is ‘expanding the pie’ (Pruitt et al. 2003:194). In this scenario, the total access to resources to both parties is increased.

If access to a consistent water supply, grazing lands, or oil revenues were increased, contention over resources would diminish as a conflict driver. I thus posit that there must be local capacity-building efforts to improve local infrastructure as well as reach revenue-sharing agreements between the governments over newly discovered oil sources. Unfortunately this is not the case between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda. While the recognition of communal land rights in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya was a step in the right direction, there is yet to be seen any legal respect for practical reciprocity. Past colonial and early independence, allocations of land cannot be undone. However, both the government and pastoralist communities themselves must evolve in order to balance communal access to resources with respect to physical land boundaries and revenue points. I suggest that the government must officially demarcate communal lands and pastoral grazing spots in order to form a quantifiable and measurable regional territory. Communal grazing lands would enable the continuation of a pastoral lifestyle while reducing issues of contention along cross-border raids and cattle rustling. Thus, any instances of livestock raiding would no longer be viewed as an ethnic, group-based conflict, but rather as an individual property violation. Judicial courts would be more able to provide effective remedies and arbitration.

These remedies would similarly apply to disputes over resources. Claims to access could successfully be justified through the judicial system. I also argue that arbitration should entertain the idea of implementing profit sharing of resources between the communities in dispute. The exact share would be determined through legal procedures.

As Wily (2011) criticizes, legal mechanisms are useless when they are not enforced in practice. Turkana and Pokot communities themselves must force the hand of the government in recognizing legal access to communal lands. I posit that in order to successfully push for rule of law, these communities themselves must coalesce around unions based on non-sociological variables. For instance, Turkana and Pokot businessmen could form a coalition or interest group around cattle herding, agricultural trade, or any number of relevant markets. These unions have the added benefit of requiring levels of reconciliation and mimetic blessings in order for individuals to effectively engage with one another across social boundaries. As has been evidenced countless times in democratic market-based economies – money talks. While elites may be able to ignore pressure from broad ethnic communities with varying interests – communities in conflict with one another – they cannot ignore the influence of a concentrated lobbying group with a significant amount of market share. Just as Kameri-Mbote (2013) notes the need to provide local communities with tools to manage a legal framework. I argue a bottom-up approach of dissemination of legal information and advocacy could provide local agency. NGOs could prove paramount in providing agency as well as facilitating the cessation of mimetic violence through mutual blessings and increased interconnectedness.

Paired with this solution is that of ‘cost cutting’. Here, parties concede on issues when costs in doing so are reduced, often due to compensation (Pruitt et al., 2003). I argue that Turkana and Pokot members can agree to install mutual land-sharing arrangements during set periods in return for more internal enforcement against cattle raiding.
Though land sharing may incur costs for original communities grazing herds at these locations, overall costs are reduced because internal sanctions decrease cattle raiding, and thus costs to defend against raids lower the cost of grazing in general. One study found that in pastoral societies, internal sanctioning against raid violators is essentially a public good. When sanctions and enforcement are initiated from within a community, societal costs of ‘shirking’ on norms are increased (Mathew and Boyd 2014). Cattle raiders not only face economic costs but social costs such as loss of bride wealth and communal respect. Thus, internal sanctions are a notion, which I argue, should be implemented in order to increase the cost of livestock raiding and reduce the cost of positive reciprocity.

At a macro-level, the proliferation of illicit small arms in Kenya is both a product of porous borders and of market incentives. While at first the task may seem monumental, reducing the costs of arms regulation is indeed achievable through both communal and state cooperation. I first conclude that Kenyan law enforcement can no longer be absent from the region. The police must increase their presence within rural pastoral grazing lands as well as along the borders between neighboring states, especially Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda. While allocating funding to this mammoth task may initially seem daunting, evidence indicates that indeed it is actually less costly in the long-run to harden borders and increase the costs of illegal arms trade than continuously destroying armaments and dealing with the aftermath of deadly pastoral rivalries (Mkutu 2008). Along with a physical police presence, I contend for a strict training regimen for border officers in order to ensure that the rule of law and respect for individual rights are respected.

The least costly means of addressing illegal arms proliferation within pastoral communities of Kenya is simply to dis-incentivize the trade altogether. The fact that Kenya’s strict weapons policy is so unusual in the region creates market mechanisms in which illegal arms are smuggled into the nation. High demand drives high prices, and smugglers are more willing to risk their livelihoods to transport and propagate arms. Here, I propose regional integration and participation in small arms limitations. Kenya’s policy towards arms sets a precedent for neighboring states. However, unless these nations adopt similar policies, arms trade will only increase the more Kenya solidifies its position. East Africa must harmonize a policy framework aimed at reducing illegal small arms. The African Union and East African Community, I argue, could provide viable forums from which to launch these initiatives. A uniform regional approach to dissuading illicit arms trade is necessary in order to effectively diminish market incentives for trade to begin with. The local effects would be a decrease in violent conflicts between pastoral communities. Even if all other factors remain constant, conflict between Turkana and Pokot societies will be less organized, more slow to develop, and ultimately less deadly.

For both internal sanctioning and external arms agreements to be effective, overarching cooperation must be facilitated at first through ushering in a norm of mutual reciprocity. A local community’s decision to sanction cattle rustlers internally is only legitimate if that community expects neighboring communities to do the same. The historical lack of authority and accountability of the Kenyan government within pastoral regions has infused a sense of impunity to livestock raiders. By simply increasing the presence of authority within rural communities, the government can signal a reversal in trends, garnering legitimacy in the perceptions of locals and commencing a new trend of mutual reciprocity in that the government will protect livestock in return for local communities also dis-incentivizing raiding. Again, this relationship is mutually beneficial – costs are reduced at both a communal level and the state level. Finally, for regional cost-reduction of arms control to occur, states must signal to one another the legitimate intentions of their stance on weapons trade. Kenya’s difficulty has arisen because illegal weapons trade is more profitable due to the vacuum created. There is no system of reciprocity in the region, and neighboring states have done little to harmonize arms control. It seems as if mutual relationships must be built from the communal level to bypass governments and instill a cross-border relationship. By bridging gaps locally, these communities can influence domestic policies to fall in line with the aspirations of regional communities as a whole. Cooperation must stem from community-based cooperation, reconciliation, and ultimately a cultural shift away from past mimetic violence.

Many anthropologists and sociologists note the difficulties present when local communities undergo cultural shifts (Lee 2004; Bobo 1988; Moreland and Levine 1982)). Oftentimes, a schism erupts between younger and older generations. Intra-group conflict can occur, especially when pressures of cultural norm shifts are exogenous. The external pressure of these norms is felt within the pastoralist communities themselves. With such a powerful external force, a solution must come from within. Girard himself illustrates mimesis with a pessimistic view. For him, mimetic violence exists as a long-term response to the natural desires, which contribute to unanimous violence. I find a fault with the fact that a natural response can lead to the paradox of these desires being replaced simply with the desire of violence or vengeance.

I thus offer that indeed there exists an ability to transcend the conflict and implement mimetic blessing. Imitation of violence drives the conflict spiral to reach this mimetic pinnacle, but if instead of violence, actors imitated and reciprocated rational behavior and good intentions, the cycle can indeed be broken. Furthermore, when mimesis of rationality replaces mimesis of violence, conflict itself is no longer a desire of communities. It is thus less likely that isolated violent behavior would be perceived as an attack of identity. I therefore draw emphasis on this possibility, and focus on the actual transcendence of mimetic violence and the shift to mimetic blessing.
How could the transformation of mimetic violence to mimetic blessings be facilitated in the context of pastoral communities who have such a long and contentious history? Elizabeth Cole notes that history education and a pedagogy that takes history seriously are vital in order to promote progressive learning of the past. She explains:

*What is critical here is not only the effect that these approaches to history can have on the formation of actively engaged, critically thinking citizens, but what they can offer to post-conflict settings where the history of the recent conflict is simply too sensitive and politically difficult to discuss openly...*

Cole and others offer education as a way to bridge a gap from the past to current generations and to successfully construct progressive and mutual reciprocity between contentious groups. Education regarding cultural history can tread lightly where the government and official mediation cannot. Bekerman and Zembylas (2014:57) note that in conflict settings, teachers must move away from the epistemological setting induced by the state and into a more critical, ontological perspective.

The state and nationhood, they argue, pre-determine the identity of instruction teachers take. Grassroots approaches successfully enshrine shifting critical assessments to peace education, and can enable education to shift away from an identity created by the state (Lahai and Ware 2013). While Cole explained that educational approaches and history teachings are vital to reconciling and transcending conflicts between communities, I wish to take her recommendations one step further. In a developing multi-ethnic nation such as Kenya, which lacks funding for educational reform and overhauls, and also has a history of a politically polarising ethnic force, attempting to implement a new practice could prove ineffective or even disastrous. An education policy focusing on negative emotions and ‘ethnic tragedies’ could prove destructive to the tensions between Pokot and Turkana communities. An ethnic-based education policy without proper institutions or plans in place can degrade already tense emotions between various groups. This ethnic pedagogy is deemed by scholars to have contributed to a large part of Balkanisation and ensuing violence in Assam, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka (Lange 2011).

There must be implementation of multi-track diplomacy in order to increase the capacity of the state to both enforce rule of law and increase local access to remedies. A multi-faceted coalition would ensure that dissemination of information and education policies are balanced. I suggest providing local NGOs with state-sponsored resources to disseminate information to local communities and elders. Still, the state has the largest potential for capacity to oversee access to resources and aid in curbing weapons proliferation. For this reason, the state is still a stakeholder and thus must serve a role in this coalition of reconciliation.

Finally, I assert that these grassroots organisations should provide classroom instructors. Local schools could offer optional classes related to ethnic history which emphasise the connections and relationships shared by all pastoralist communities. Where the government fails to transcend ethnic boundaries in mediating conflict resolution, empowered local organisations can combine with education in order to bridge social gaps and promote mediation, reconciliation, and ultimately a peaceful and respectful pastoral environment.

Can empowering local organisations in such a way actually alleviate systemic ethnic politicisation in Kenya? By conditioning the allocation of resources to multi-ethnic coalitions and NGOs which respect ethnic diversity, donors begin to set a bottom-up precedent of interest-based coalitions formed around ethnic unions and based upon participation rather than contention. The ultimate goal of conditioning aid to groups who promote these values is to create an environment in which multi-ethnic coalitions of unity, paired with interest-group participation in policy advocacy, become the norm. By institutionalising broad, cross-cultural relationships, mutual reciprocity is introduced into the system, which also has the effect of dis-incentivising violence. As Boehmke and Bowen (2010:667-668) note, interest-based advocacy correlates with an increase of democratic values. Bienen and Herbst (1996:27-28) also support this analysis regarding Africa and note a decrease in ethnic politics and rent seeking. By providing agency to local organizations, not only can ethnic tensions between pastoral communities be reduced, but also the systemic ethnic politicization in Kenya itself. The catalyst in this case is the transformative nature that local cooperation can have in promoting mutual reciprocity and ultimately mimetic blessings.

Reconciliation is vital to shifting the spiral among Turkana and Pokot communities from mimetic violence to mimetic blessings. Scholars such as Vamik Volkan (1998) argue that by reconciling differences between parties, the results of violence cannot be undone, and that the situation cannot be exactly the same as it was before the violence. Vern Redekop (2011), however, asserts that pairing spiritual reconciliation with focusing on personal connections may contribute to emergent creativity, which can indeed transform previous relationships among parties. Similarly, the multitrack peacemaking initiatives I posit, by pairing local and state-sponsored efforts, allow for the emergence of new principles in reconciliation. New norms emerge from multitrack approaches of reconciliation. Meta-requisites like implementing education to bridge cultural gaps as well as internal enforcement mechanisms of justice promote emergent creativity. The conflict spiral between the feuding pastoral communities is not only terminated, it is transformed into a spiral of mimetic blessings. With these blessings in place, a positive peace can ultimately be reached, which can erode negative reciprocity and transform the situation into one of mutual reciprocity and blessings.

This analysis thus seeks to expand upon mimesis within the realm of conflict. I have attempted to steer discussions away from the notion of the ‘inevitability’ of mimetic violence within a conflict spiral, and rather to raise questions as to how these conflict situations can be changed into relationships of mimetic blessing. Mimetic violence with its reciprocal behavior that occurs not so
much for material desires or resources, but simply for the desire of vengeance itself, has to be counteracted. How can the desire of violence and vengeance be a rational response within any one society?

Thus, this study aims to provide evidence for the fact that not only is mimetic blessing possible within society, but it can serve as a means to end conflict through a natural state of rationality. The dehumanization that occurs due to mimetic violence, alongside the other psychological and group factors that drive pastoral conflict within Kenya, can indeed be reversed when the conflict environment is transformed.

4. Conclusion

Peace initiatives are a common undertaking in this region. This finding is made apparent by the large number of respondents who indicated that they were aware of similar initiatives being implemented in their regions. In spite of this, the study highlights the fact that no peace initiatives as presently structured contributes to the termination and eventual eradication of cross border raids. This means that all the stakeholders in the peace process rely on the perpetuation of conflict to preserve their jobs, hence remain relevant within the community.

This paper presented the nexus between cattle rustling and peace initiatives between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda. Illustrating the cause-effect relationship between cattle rustling peace initiatives between the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda, tabulated and graphical results have presented a basis for discussion of the findings. The key sections in this chapter included; the cross border peace initiatives found in the Kenya-Uganda border region, the distribution of people who participate in cross border peace initiatives by gender, the distribution of respondents who participate in cross-border peace initiatives by ethnicity, the nexus/relationship between peace initiative and cattle rustling and the reported support for peace initiatives and the benefits for actors that support peace initiatives. All these attributes have had the respondents’ feedback reported in this chapter. Arguments and propositions from other scholars have also been used in further analysis of the findings to either affirm or critique the existing knowledge based on the fresh findings.

References

27. DOI: 10.1002/9781118517390.wbetc166 Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.