



RESEARCH ARTICLE

FACTORS INFLUENCING CATTLE RUSTLING RELATED CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS : A CASE OF BARAGOI SUB COUNTY, KENYA

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 17th July, 2015
Received in revised form
17th August, 2015
Accepted 21st September, 2015
Published online 20th October, 2015

Key words:

Conflict resolution,
Small arms,
Peace building,
Moran,
Cattle rustling.

ABSTRACT

Conflicts are common phenomena in many regions of the world especially in areas, which are endowed with scarce natural resources. The demographic consequences of conflict and violence in the developing world are receiving increased attention and so is cattle rustling related conflicts in Kenya. Samburu County specifically Baragoi sub-county has been experiencing series of serious conflicts especially relating to cattle rustling since 1994. The worst incidence was the Baragoi massacre that led to mass death and injury of soldiers in November 2012. Different governmental and non-governmental organizations have been trying to do away with cattle rustling albeit, it has proven futile because of various factors that influence of cattle rustling related to conflict resolutions in Baragoi Sub-County. The specific objectives were evaluated and they included how proliferation of small arms, physical terrain, cultural practices and local leaders influence curtailment of cattle rustling in Baragoi Sub-County. The study employed mixed research designs. Probability sampling techniques that included cluster sampling, proportionate, simple random and stratified sampling were used, besides non-probability sampling methods that included purposive sampling. Data were collected using mixed method both quantitative and qualitative; research instruments such as questionnaires and focus group discussion guide for community members and interview guide for key informants aided in data collection. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and presented using frequencies, means and percentages while qualitative data was analyzed and categorized into themes and presented in form of narratives.

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Citation: Duncan Lenairoshi, Peter N. Keiyoro and Josephine W. Ngunjiri, 2015. "Factors influencing cattle rustling related conflict resolutions : A case of Baragoi sub county, Kenya", *International Journal of Current Research*, 7, (10), 21087-21092.

INTRODUCTION

Although conflicts in Kenya are of many different kinds, Juma (2000) classifies them into four main categories: Conflicts among pastoral communities, Conflicts linked to presence of refugees, Conflicts between pastoralists and crop farming communities and lastly, ethnic clashes. This study focused on conflict among pastoral communities related to cattle rustling. Some conflicts within and between pastoralist communities, such as raiding and cattle rustling have a long history and have to some extent become an aspect of cultural practices among pastoralist communities (Kaimba, Njehia and Guliye, 2011). Juma (2000) observed that, current environmental pressures

have changed conflict dynamics. For example, the 1999-2001 droughts that wiped out the entire livestock increased pressure on the Turkana community to raid other communities in order to restock their lost herd. The water shortage coupled with shortage of pasture sparked competition, which led to conflicts between rival groups (Eaton, 2008). The drought of the year 2011 in the arid northern Kenya depleted pasture and water points in Moyale, triggering inter-clan attacks and counter-attacks where seven people were killed in Burji, Moyale town (Mwangi, 2006). It should be noted that among the pastoral communities, cattle rustling is largely caused by competition over control of and access to natural resources particularly water and pasture. Other causes of conflicts include historical rivalry, deep-seated cultural values, land issues, political incitements, idleness amongst the youth and more recently proliferation of illicit arms (USAID, 2005).

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Cattle rustling in the North region of Kenya are perceived to be part of a pastoral culture and livelihood of resident communities. However, in recent years, due to the proliferation of modern small arms, commercialization of livestock raiding, dispute over land tenure rights, banditry and predation, the cultural practice has become a widespread, sophisticated, more violent, and destructive activity among pastoral communities (Mkutu, 2008; Mkutu, 2006). Currently cattle rustling is no longer an issue of culture but has turned into a violation of human rights. Doss *et al.* (2008) clearly postulated that displacement of families is a major consequence of conflict. The proliferation of modern automatic weapons is well documented as having had a negative effect on the scale and impact of armed violence in pastoral communities (Mkutu, 2006). It is for this purpose that this study was launched to shed light on factors influencing cattle rustling related conflict resolutions.

The demographic consequences of conflict and violence in the developing world are receiving increased attention (Brunborg, Helge and Henrik, 2005; Eaton, 2008) and so is conflict in Kenya. Although Kenya is considered peaceful country, an in-depth scrutiny reveals an unprecedented wave of internal and cross-border conflicts. In a multi ethnic state like Kenya, people have strong attachment to their communities, espousing fundamentally different values and in competition with each other for access to or control over natural resources, hence creating acrimony and divisions. Samburu County, just like many other arid and semi-arid regions has been experiencing pastoralist and ethnic conflicts especially in the Northern parts of the county. This has resulted in increased numbers of humanitarian aid from non-governmental organizations. These groups have played pivotal operational role in uplifting the lives of the dwellers. These conflicts have also resulted in presence of different government security personnel in the area; comprising military forces, Kenya police, General Service unit, Administration police and anti-stock theft units.

The Samburu County government has been organizing peace campaigns. Despite various measures to curb this menace put in place by the national government, the County government and non-governmental organizations, peaceful co existence among the communities has still proven elusive. Umpteen numbers of factors are influencing cattle rustling related conflict resolution in Baragoi regardless of the joint effort by different organizations. These include World Food Program (WFP), Agency for Technical Cooperation and Organization (ACTED), International Medical Corps (IMC), World Vision (WV), religious organization particularly the Catholic Church and both the national and County governments. These factors, *inter alia* were the primary focus of this research.

In November 2012, the Country witnessed one of the worst fatalities in the history of cattle rustling in Kenya following the massacre of 42 police officers in Baragoi, Samburu County, by bandits. This incident resulted in closure of Schools and thousands of people were displaced (Shiundu, 2012). Conflicts in the area have intensified resulting to the displacement of many more Samburu residents in Masikita and Bedera villages in Baragoi (Mwangi, 2006) The conflict escalated to becoming manhunt affair not only in Baragoi sub-county but also in

Maralal town and its environs. This study, therefore, sought to establish the key factors that have influenced cattle rustling related conflict resolution in Baragoi Sub-County.

Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to find out the factors influencing curtailment of Cattle rustling related conflict resolution in Baragoi Sub-County in Samburu County. The study was guided by the following specific objectives.

- i) Assess the influence of physical terrain on cattle rustling and related conflict resolution.
- ii) Identify the influence of cultural practices on Cattle rustling and the related conflict resolution.
- iii) Determine the influence of local leadership on cattle rustling and the related conflict resolution.

Study Area

Samburu County borders Marsabit County to the North East, Isiolo County to the East, Laikipia County to the South, Baringo County to the South West and Turkana County to the North west. The County covers an area of approximately 21,126 square kilometers with an estimated population of 223,937 according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS 2009 Census). Samburu County is among the poorest in the country with 73 percent of its population living below the poverty line (Less than a dollar per day) according to Kenya integrated Household Budget survey (Dankit, 2005). Three quarter of the County comprises arid and semi-arid rangeland, which receives between 250-600 mm of rainfall per year (Long rain foods assessment report, 2013).

Insecurity related to cattle rustling and high banditry continues to disrupt livelihoods strategies within the county. Poor roads and telecommunication infrastructure are poor and remain the greatest challenge to communication in Samburu County (Camilla Herd, 2013).

The County was recently sub-divided administratively into three districts namely Samburu Central, East and North each with two administrative divisions. However, the latter has been experiencing frequent inter-ethnic conflicts especially with the Turkana community. Baragoi sub County is bordered by Marsabit County to the North East, Turkana County to the North West, Baringo County to the west and Isiolo County to the South East. According to KPHC (2009) the Samburu North Sub County covers an area of 7,024.4 square kms and a density of 9 persons per square kilometer. It has a population of 65,785 persons (Camilla, 2013). This study focused on Baragoi sub-county, which is inhabited by the Samburu, tribe comprising 75 percent of the population, Turkana 20 percent of population and other tribes comprise 5 percent (Camilla, 2013).

The area is known for bloody conflicts related to cattle rustling that have claimed many lives of security forces, local inhabitants and loss of livelihoods and property. Its rugged terrain and impassable roads make recovery of livestock impossible once they have been driven to Suguta Valley.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employed mixed research methods. The mixed method entailed philosophical assumptions that guided the direction of the collection and analysis of the data (Creswell and Plano, 2007; Creswell, 1999). In this study this involved mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods in many phases in the research process. Mixed methods research provided strengths that offset the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research (Gay and Airsian, 2009).

In the quantitative paradigm, Cross-sectional survey study was used to find out the factors that influenced cattle rustling related conflict resolutions. This involved collection of standardized, quantifiable information from members of the population sample (Trochim, 2006). The advantage of using this survey method was that participants had time to answer the questions and there was a quick turnaround (Trochim, 2006). In addition to this, survey research presented information about these specific populations and from this information; generalization to other populations of similar characteristics could be made (Dickinson & Blunt, 2005). In qualitative research method, the researchers used the phenomenological design according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009). The assessment of the individuals' perceptions, feelings, and life experiences were made. This aided the researchers to identify the factors influencing cattle rustling related conflict resolutions. Interview guide was used to collect data. This allowed the researchers to probe the respondent on desired issues. The interviews gave a chance for the researchers to make inferences from what the respondent said both in verbal and non-verbal form. This method solely was used to find out the knowledge of chairperson of Catholic justice and peace commission (CJPC) and the member of peace committee's knowledge of the factors influencing curtailment of cattle rustling in Baragoi. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were used to elicit information from the community members. This was form of group interview mostly triangulated with more traditional forms of interviews, questionnaires and observations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). It was good in obtaining several perspectives about the same variables. It also facilitated easy conceptualization of the gap between what people said and did. Non-probability procedures were used to select the sample size. The researchers chose purposive sampling procedure since it gave the sample with the required characteristics for the study (Best and Kahn, 2006). According to Best and Kahn (2006), purposive sampling help the researchers in building a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs. Therefore, the researchers intentionally targeted the area chiefs, religious leaders, senior police officers in charge and the peace committee chairpersons. The area chiefs were targeted because of their vast knowledge of conflict, Religious and NGOs because of their impartiality on issues relating to conflict. Stratified random sampling was used to include both men and women leaders in order to remove gender bias in this study.

Probability sampling was also used which permitted the researchers to specify the chance, that each member of the defined population would have been selected to participate in

the study. Proportionate sampling which was composed of several sub-groups in number was also used. Simple random cluster sampling was used for each sub-group. This was useful in order for the researchers to make generalizations of the wider population (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). It also allowed the researchers to make use of inferential statistics (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

The researchers used triangulation method of data collection, which involved the use of two or more data collection instruments (Ogula, 2008). This contributed to the trustworthiness of the data (Glesne, 2009). The research used both primary and secondary data. in-order to elicit people's opinion, attitudes, beliefs and values about cattle rustling. Primary data was obtained through self-administered questionnaire with close and open-ended questions. As much as possible, a 5-point likert scale was used to investigate the influence of proliferation of small arms, physical terrain, cultural practices and local leaders' role in curtailment of cattle rustling in Baragoi. The questionnaire included structured and unstructured questions and were administered through drop and pick method to respondents who were peace committee chairpersons. The closed ended questions enabled the researchers to collect quantitative data, while open-ended questions enabled the researchers to collect qualitative data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section dealt with the general information about the respondents, while the second section with assessment of factors influencing conflict resolution in Baragoi Sub County of Samburu County.

Secondary data was collected by use of desktop review techniques from the published reports and other documents. Secondary data included the publications, journals and periodicals. In order to increase the accuracy of the data an in depth interview was conducted with key people like area chiefs, religious leaders, senior officers in charge, communities leaders for instance the County administrators and community elders. These were attempted at triangulation stage and were deemed to compliment for the weaknesses of the questionnaires.

The researchers assessed validity of the instruments through the use of other professionals or experts as advocated by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). Thus, content validity of the instruments was established by consulting experts from the department of extramural studies in the University of Nairobi. Marlow (2001) points out that by designing the questionnaire, the researchers could construct the document to accurately reflect the concepts that the researchers wanted to measure. Therefore, the researchers used instruments that were expressly written for this study. To ascertain the validity of questionnaires, interview schedules and FGD guides, a pilot study was done among community members and key informants who were not to be part of the study.

This study determined reliability of the instrument through split half method. This was to test the internal consistency reliability in the questionnaires for respondents from one of the groups identified in the cluster sampling technique and analyzed if the test items were consistent among themselves

and with the test as a whole. Split half measured how consistently of the instrument measured the construct of interest and it assumed that if all items were drawn from the same domain, then the two halves should correlate highly with each other (Marlow, 2001). The coefficient obtained was converted into an appropriate correlation for the entire test using Spearman Brown prophecy formula. To ascertain reliability of results, alternate form method was used; a Pearson product correlation was run to test the coefficient of results obtained from questionnaires and those that would be obtained in FGD.

This research used descriptive and inferential data analysis (Kothari, 2014). This was achieved through cleaning, coding and entering data into a computer program (SSPS version 20) and analyzing it and thus being able to make conclusions and recommendations. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), the percentage of subjects who respond to questionnaires is adequate if it is 50%, good at 60% and very good at 70%. The researchers achieved 90% response rate. On receiving the questionnaires, response rate was computed and its adequacy established. Quantitative data were obtained from the closed-ended items in the questionnaires. It was thereafter analyzed in order to identify general trends in the selected population (Kothari 2014). The raw data was analyzed after being coded, for instance 1 for Yes and 2 for No, 1 for Male and 2 for Female and entered into the computer by use of Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS, version 20). Data was summarized using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and percentages.

On the other hand, qualitative data was derived from interviews conducted on key informants, FGD, and from the open-ended items on the various categories of questionnaires. The raw data were examined and analyzed to establish accuracy, usefulness and completeness. The process of analyzing qualitative data involved systematically searching, arranging, organizing, breaking data into manageable units, synthesizing and looking for patterns among variables. The researchers categorized data into themes and used thematic analysis through discussions and presented them in form of narratives.

Ethical considerations

The researchers made sure that the purpose of this study was fully explained in advance to respondents. Consent was obtained where respondents were asked to sign a consent letter. Since cattle rustling is a sensitive issue that might evoke emotions and memories among the respondents, the researchers briefed the respondents prior to responding to questionnaires, conducting interviews and before holding FGD. In case of any emotional issues, the researchers referred the respondents with immediacy to a legal counselor. Confidentiality at all times was upheld (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). To safeguard anonymity of the identity of the respondents the researchers applied coding. The researchers were open and honest in dealing with respondents. Respect and dignity for human respondents was upheld. All the information gotten from sources other than the researchers were duly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism. Findings of the present

study were reported with the highest possible objectivity and utmost honesty.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Influence of Cattle rustling on conflict resolution

Taking cattle rustling as either an independent or dependent attribute of conflict resolution, the Chi-Square test was used to determine the level of association between cattle rustling with conflict resolution methods in Baragoi as far as the sample was concerned. In this case, this variable was treated in the sense that if there is no association or relationship with conflict resolution, then conflict resolution is independent of it, otherwise any relationship with conflict resolution would mean it is a dependent variable.

Table 1. Influence of Cattle rustling on conflict resolution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Fairly influence	15	42.92	42.92	42.92
Strongly influence	20	57.12	57.12	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Considering the data in the Table 1, the frequency column indicates those who participated in the study, out of the expected 35, who responded, 57.12% argued that cattle rustling was a major factor that strongly affects conflict resolution. However, 42.92% thought that a cattle rustling fairly affects the resolution effort of the conflicts.

Influence of Cultural practices on cattle rustling

Most pastoralist communities in Kenya still hold to their cultural practices and so are the Samburu and Turkana communities. Their cultural practices have strongly influenced cattle rustling in this region, whereby the residents of Baragoi and the surrounding neighborhood consider conflicts that arise as a result of cattle rustling as being a long cultural practice that shows prowess of a community against others. Data in table 2, show that out of the 35 respondents, 6 which represent 17.12 % argued that culture does not affect cattle rustling at all. However, 65.72% agreed that culture affect efforts geared towards conflicts resolutions related to cattle rustling. Cultural practices such as special traditional songs for the heroes who have mastered the art of cattle rustling are sang by the women and young ladies. Passage rites and wealth are measured in terms of land and cattle among communities. It should be noted 17.7% of the respondents strongly support the fact that cultural orientations affect conflict resolution related to cattle rustling in Baragoi sub county.

Table 2. Influence of culture on cattle rustling

Cultural influence	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Doesn't influence at all	6	17.12	17.12
Influence fairly	23	65.72	82.93
Strongly influence	6	17.1	100.0
Total	35	100.0	

Influence of local leaders on Cattle rustling

On the influence of Cattle rustling in Baragoi, most of the respondents who participated in the research indicated that cattle rustling is still the dominant factor that influences conflict resolution in the area. As observed during focus groups discussions, many respondents argued that most conflicts arise normally because the local leaders are spearheading them.

Table 3. Political influence on cattle rustling

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Fairly influence	12	34.34	34.34
Strongly influence	23	65.73	100.0
Total	35	100.0	

Out of the 35 respondents, 34.34% however argued that political leaders affect cattle rustling moderately table 3. But 65.73% agreed that local leadership is amongst the major factors that have influenced the culture of cattle rustling in Baragoi this concurs with Gagnon and Philip (2004) whose theory argue that leaders incite ethno-nationalism to secure their own hold on power.

Influence of Physical terrain on cattle rustling

Poor land terrain have influenced cattle rustling immensely as it has made it overly impossible for the recovery of the stolen livestock. It was found that 60% of the respondents felt that poor roads and most of the time bushy environment have moderately affected cattle rustling with 22.6% strongly supporting the fact that physical terrain affects the efforts to resolve conflicts associated with cattle rustling in Baragoi, Table 4.

Table 4. influence of physical terrain on cattle rustling

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Doesn't influence	6	17.13	17.13
Fairly influence	21	60.0	77.1
Strongly influence	8	22.9	100.0
Total	35	100.0	

However, a small group of the respondents of 17.13 %felt that physical terrain does not affect effort to resolve these conflicts.

DISCUSSION

The study sought to determine the factors that influence cattle rustling related conflict resolutions. The study found out that

cultural practice is indeed the dominant factor that influences cattle rustling. This finding is in agreement with that of Eaton (2008) who found that communities use raiding to articulate their hostility toward enemy communities. This conforms with Kaimba, Njehia and Guliye, (2011) who argued that some conflicts within and between pastoralist communities, such raiding and cattle rustling have a long history and have to some extent become an aspect of traditional pastoralist culture. In order for this menace to be curbed, retrogressive cultural practices should be done away with. Morans undertake raiding mostly to amass wealth for the marriage purposes. After a successive raid has taken place, heroic songs are sung in praise of the rustler and beautiful girls are presented as gifts to the morans who took part in the raid.

The study sought to establish how local leaders influence cattle rustling in Baragoi sub-County. The study found that local politicians especially the members of County assemblies indeed influence conflict resolution in Baragoi sub-county The findings agree with those of Gagnon and Philip, (2004), who found that leaders incite ethno nationalism to secure their own hold on power. Gagnon and Philip ,(2004) advanced the theory of elite manipulation which applies in this case which places the blame squarely with elites, which for the purpose of this study are defined as any political figure that hold or compete for political office. Local politicians should refrain from dividing people based on their tribal ties and embrace development for the entire county. If all the people in Samburu County led by the leaders chosen and elected concentrate on all rounded development and avoid propaganda and hate speech, conflicts in the County will be curbed. Leaders should create more jobs opportunities for the youth.

Lack of good roads network has also contributed to cattle rustling as raiders have had upper hand in hiding and moving through the bushy terrain with the stolen livestock, as they are familiar with the impassable paths and terrain. As one cascades down the infamous Suguta valley, it is not doubt he/she will be holding their breath with the impassable, dangerous and bushy pathway that has only one entrance and no exit.

Conclusion

The study concludes that physical terrain has played a pivotal role in influencing cattle rustling in the region. Poor roads network especially in the Olmorok, Ngilai and Suguta valley have made it cumbersome and impossible for the quick recovery of livestock. Once the stolen livestock have entered these regions to access them proved futile as the path is narrow and bushy, a very easy target for the ambush of the security officers.

The study further concludes that Local leaders especially area chiefs, members of national legislature and village elders have contributed immensely to cattle rustling in Baragoi. They aid in the provision of either financial support to the rustlers or security after the raid. This has made it overly impossible to recover the stolen livestock from either region. This culture of cattle rustling will eventually come to an end through the participatory efforts of the local leaders especially if themselves are impartial all the time and putting both politics

and ethnicity aside and treat the rustlers as common thieves and criminals.

The study further concludes that the culture of cattle rustling is a pre dominant factor that has influenced conflict resolution in the area simply because it is a cultural aspect that has undergone dynamics over time. Use of guns, ready market for raided cattle and politicization of cattle rustling has made it more of a business and hence manhunt for the rivals. Ethnic overtones have also gotten into the picture worsening situations. The concerned agencies and stakeholders could use the important insights of this study in coming up with measures to resolve these conflicts

Recommendations

The county government should create more conservancies in the Sub County of which a few selected community members including Morans from both Turkana and Samburu would be trained as rangers and whose responsibility would be patrolling the vast land of Baragoi on daily basis and paid salaries at the end of the month. Through this initiative, the issue of cattle rustling will be curbed as recovery of the stolen livestock will be easy and fast as conservancies would aid in search unlike long ago when the security personnel from Baragoi town Centre who had little knowledge of the terrain would be deployed in the search.

The county government put in place good road networks especially in common escape route after the raid. With improved road network, this culture of cattle rustling will be curbed in a way.

Conflict of interests

This research report has no conflict of interest whatsoever.

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