

Land and Conflict in the Ilemi Triangle of East Africa

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Abstract

Insecurity among the nations of the Horn of Africa is often concentrated in the nomadic pastoralist areas. Why? Is the pastoralist economy, which revolves around livestock, raiding and counter-raiding to blame for the violence? Why are rebel movements in the Horn, such the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in Ethiopia, several warlords in Somalia, etc, situated in nomadic pastoralist areas? Is the nomadic lifestyle to blame for lack of commitment to the ideals of any one nation? Why have the countries in the Horn failed to absorb and incorporate nomadic pastoralists in their structures and institutions, forty years after independence? Utilizing a political economy approach, this article seeks to answer these questions, and more.

This article is both a historical and philosophical interrogation of questions of nationhood and nationalism vis-à-vis the transient or mobile nature that these nomadic pastoralist "nations" apparently represent. It scrutinizes the absence of physical and emotional belonging and attachment that is often displayed by these peoples through their actions, often seen as unpatriotic, such as raiding, banditry, rustling and killing for cattle. The article assesses the place of transient and migratory ethnic groups in the nation-state, especially their lack of fixed abodes in any one nation-state and how this plays out in the countries of the region. I pay special attention to cross-border migratory ethnic groups that inhabit the semi-desert areas of the Sudan-Kenya-Ethiopia-Somalia borderlines as case studies.

Key Words: Ilemi Triangle; Pastoralism; Lord's Resistance Army (LRA); Oromo Liberation Front (OLF); Nationhood

Introduction

The article focuses on the Shangilla and Oromo (Borana) of Kenya and Ethiopia, Turkana of Kenya, Nyangatom (Merille), Dongiro, (Dassanetch and Anyuak of Ethiopia, Toposa of Sudan and Uganda and the Jie and Karimojong of Uganda. It is my contention that this volatile security "fault line" consisting of "transient nations" has not received the required scholarly attention. That issues of patriotism, nationalism and nationhood have never been thoroughly interrogated vis-à-vis the nomadic pastoralists in the Horn. To which countries do these migratory groups belong? Can they be incorporated? I will argue that the lack of nomadic pastoralist heroes and heroines, marginalization of their traditions and cultures, is to blame for their indifference and ambivalence. Further, I will argue that lack of proper policies and appreciation of these "transient" or "mobile" or even "seasonal" nations by governments of the region are to blame for their continued existence outside the realm of nationhood and lack of national attachment and nationalism. I show how seasonal migratory ethnic groups, such as the Shangilla behave. These groups which live half a year in Kenya and the other half in Ethiopia according to the rain pattern, open more gaps of alienation and further distance from nation-state ideals. That is the gist of my article.

This article is based on findings emanating from a research project on conflict and banditry among pastoralist ethnic groups in border areas of Eastern Africa. The study carried out between 1998 and 2000 and in which I participated was funded by Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and Association for World Education (Kenya). The article examines the politics of livestock, which are treasured resources, source of life and wealth, and also, cause of wars and conflict among the pastoralist peoples of the Ilemi Triangle of Eastern Africa and adjoining areas. The contention of this article is that livestock are at the center of the wars, conflicts and bandit activities in the region.

The article shows that by and large, the combatants search, raid and kill for livestock, for survival given that livestock is the mainstay for livelihood in this region. I point out that the Ilemi Triangle and its environs is just an arena, a theater of sorts, in which greater global issues and rivalries have been and continue to be played, and that the "beasts of war" (livestock) are mere catalysts and pawns. This area, which is a recipient of spillover effects from armed conflicts in Somalia, Southern Ethiopia, Northern Kenya, Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda, is a death trap, a security nightmare for all governing authorities surrounding it, legitimate or illegitimate.

The actors pursue personal, clan, ethnic and national objectives. Thus all the combatants in these conflicts are dug in and determined to pursue their objectives to the end however illogically. Livestock as reported in all raids and skirmishes is the main denominator to all the combatants and is likely to remain so until peace or alternative economic avenues and ways of livelihood come to the Ilemi Triangle and its environs.

Further, I argue that the problems afflicting this part of Eastern Africa have their origins in globalization due to the fact that all the combatants have a certain connection to global forces in history. It is my contention that the Somali state broke up after Siad Barre's regime was brought down in a rebel onslaught that was a direct impact from the collapse of the Soviet Union; that the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement gets support from the international community on the ideological crest of fighting Islamic fundamentalism associated with the Khartoum government; that the pastoralist ethnic groups in the Triangle because of the availability of the AK-47 which they get easily through wars in the region connected with global forces; that the Lords' Resistance Army as financed by the Khartoum government is a counter measure against Uganda's support of SPLM/A and therefore the other external forces. The cellular phones, the powerful radio communication equipment used today by cattle raiders and soldiers, the modern war machines and weapons are all factors of globalization and will constitute the rationale of this article. Thus, by and large, in as much as the problems of Ilemi Triangle may be about livestock, they are also about international ideological scheming and counter scheming. Select examples of few of the ethnic groups in the region are highlighted to address the relationship between livestock and bandit activities in the Triangle in particular and the region in general.

Banditry: Genesis and Spread in Eastern Africa

Donald Crummey has argued that "banditry is a form of criminality very widespread in agrarian class societies," adding that that "Africanists have done little with bandits" (Crummey, 1986a: 5-6). Crummey acknowledges Edmond Keller as the first Africanist into the field. Keller, in his interrogation of what he interpreted as social banditry in the Mau Mau, Kenya's war of liberation, he unravels protest and violence (Keller, 1973). Yet the Mau Mau movement and its activists

have been portrayed and interpreted variously as a peasant revolt consisting of a horde of blood thirsty criminals, war mongers, bandits and even as rebels (Barnett and Njama, 1966; Furedi, 1989; Temu, 1972). Other interpretations portray Mau Mau as a positive nationalist movement full of patriots (Kaggia, 1975; Kanogo, 1987; Kinyatti, 1980 and 1986). Crummey says, "Banditry was widespread in nineteenth and twentieth century Ethiopia" (Crummey, 1986b: 133). It had aspects of armed defiance, instances of outlawry and lives based on plunder. On banditry, he adds, in "northeast Africa, where from the Sudan to Kenya, it refers to any armed band at odds with the state" (ibid.135). But it was Eric Hobsbawn who placed bandits firmly on scholarly agenda through his book *Bandits* (Hobsbawn, 1972 and 1981).

In the first edition of this book (1972), Hobsbawn drew attention to the activities of Ghanaian smugglers. In second edition (1981) he vividly recounts the careers of the Masazgi brothers of Eritrea. Following Hobsbawn, Garvase Clarence-Smith has given an account of banditry in the Huila highlands of Southern Angola in the years from 1860 to about 1910 in what he calls 'social banditry' (Clarence-Smith, 1979:82-8). This is in reference to social upheavals, which followed white settlement in the area, and the attendant effects that caused it. Scramble for land and cattle between Boars and Portuguese on the one hand, and the Nyaneka on the opposite side, caused some Nyaneka peasants to the hills where they were joined by soldiers and slaves.

Clarence-Smith makes a distinction between social banditry and common banditry. In his discourse he uses Oorlog to illustrate common banditry, describing how Oorlog moved to and from police service and banditry with such ease and frequency that will baffle those less familiar with bandits and banditry in Africa. African governments, newspapers and other media often employ rustling, stock theft, thuggery, banditry, *shifta* or *shefta*¹ and robbery almost interchangeably. In their anthropological analyses and evaluation of events among herders in East Africa, Fukui and Turton (1979) noted that inter-ethnic fighting was exacerbated in the 1970s by easy availability of firearms in what they described as warfare (Fukui and Turton, 1979). Writing on the same societies in the 1990s, Fukui and Markakis describe the violent confrontations between ethnic groups in the region simply as conflict (Fukui and Markakis, 1994).

Rustling, raiding, theft, robbery, thuggery are all levels of forms of conflict, deviant behavior traits and patterns that do not conform to societal norms. In his discussion of ethnic conflict in Africa, Nnoli conceives conflicts as "contradictions arising from differences in interests, ideas, ideologies, orientations, perceptions and tendencies" (Nnoli, 1998: 6). He concedes that these contradictions exist at all levels of society, individual, group, institution and nation to the point that "it is difficult to conceive of history outside the resolution of conflicts" (ibid.). Thus many scholars have problematized the terms and concepts bandit, banditry and conflict and their meaning and interpretation are far from universal unanimity and acceptability.

Many conflicts in Eastern Africa, whether violent or non-violent, usually occur over scarcity of resources. In fact it is during droughts and famine that raiding for livestock intensifies in the pastoralist domains. With the reduced livestock populations, the raiders have turned their attention to any resources that will earn them survival in this harsh terrain. The attendant loss of lives, destruction of property and dislocation of populations and development projects are usually unacceptable to local and international opinion.

¹ Shefta in Amharic means bandit or rebel. Shifta, the common usage in Kenya and Somalia means armed raiders from the bush or jungle, and who have no fixed abode. The word assumed great currency in Kenya in the 1960s during the Somali uprisings often known as "Shifta war" in Kenya's military history.

Conflicts over resources like livestock tend to be violent and messy and often result to no-holds-barred situations in which human lives are greatly devalued. They also tend to be protracted, as has been the case in the Ilemi Triangle where some of the ethnic groups have been raiding each since time immemorial. Because of sophisticated weaponry supplied by patrons from abroad, violence is done on high technological levels far above the region's people's capacity. With these modern weapons a whole family or clan can be decimated in one engagement. This has contributed to tragically endemic climate of violence that has beset many parts of eastern Africa. The antiquated Austrian Mannlicher rifle, the weapon of the 1970s, first replaced the spears and arrows. Since the 1980s, they have now been replaced by the Kalashnikov (AK-47), Uzi and other machine guns and assault rifles. Conflict and banditry have gone beyond mere want and raiding for livestock as each ethnic group strives to survive the turbulence. It is against this theoretical underpinning that this article is premised.

Colonial Legacy: Political Mapping of the Ilemi Triangle

Ilemi Triangle² is the area approximately 400 kilometers in triangular radius in three directions from where Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan borders meet. The free grazing space in the Triangle was reserved in April 1924 after a conference at Kitgum, Uganda attended by colonial officials from Kenya, Uganda and the Sudan. The Triangle and its environs that include the Lower Omo Valley³ have a very long and prominent standing in global historiography of Eastern Africa. The strands of globalization in the Triangle began in 1888 with the arrival of Count Teleki and Von Hohnel on the shores of Lake Turkana (which Teleki had named Lake Rudolf). That year (1888) also marked the beginning of intense exploration in the region by Italian, English, French, Russian and Ethiopian travelers most of whom had imperial designs in this area in the post-Berlin conference period (Tornay, 1993:157). Between 1898 and 1900 several expeditions were sent to the Triangle first by Ras Wolde Giorgis with the help of the Russian Bulatovich for Negus Menelik II the Emperor of Ethiopia who conquered and annexed the Lower Omo River, then the British who conquered and aggrandized the Triangle areas of Kenya, Uganda and Sudan (Ibid.). By 1918 with the final British expedition (the Labor Patrol) directed against the Turkana, the Dassanetch and the Nyangatom, and the 1919 expedition against the Borana, Burji, Gabra, El Molo and Rendile, pacification of the area was over (Amutabi, 1999).

Due to its permanent pasture as a result of waters from River Tarach and other smaller rivers pouring into the Lotagipi swamp and other closely linked smaller swamps, the Triangle was carved out to be a neutral zone by colonial authorities keen to minimize conflict among their African subjects. It was to be a safety net for pastoralist ethnic groups in the surrounding areas who were often engaged in violent conflicts over grazing rights and water during drought. This neutrality was granted after the Kitgum conference resolution of 1924. Thus the Toposa (Sudan), the Merile (or Dassanetch), the Nyangatom and the Tirma (Ethiopia) and Turkana (Kenya) were to graze and water their livestock under the supervision of the British authorities in Kenya. Since the Triangle was the first to receive modern arms among African hands, it formed the cradle of rush for arms in the region, and experienced the earliest violent skirmishes. Even then they were on smaller scale not comparable to what has been occurring since the 1990s with modern globalization (Amutabi and Were, 2000).

² The Ilemi Triangle was named after Chief Ilemi (Ilembi, Melile, Chambar) of the Anuak whose village was located on the Sudan bank of the Akobo river near the juncture of the River Ajibur and the Akobo.

³ The Lower Omo Valley is situated on the margins of three states Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan.

Modern militarization and the rush for arms in the Ilemi Triangle in particular and Eastern Africa as a whole started in 1937 when the Italians occupied the Lower Omo Valley and incorporated the local people (the Merile and Nyangatom) in their army. One thousand rifles were distributed among these people in order to help the Italians to stop or prevent Ethiopian and British counter attacks. Armed with these superior weapons, the Nyangatom and Merile raided the Turkana in 1937. In this attack, Turkana lost 300 men. The British through a column of the King's African Rifles retaliated on behalf of the Turkana who were now subjects of the British Empire and killed 24 Merile and seized some livestock (Tornay, 1993:159). The arming of the local pastoralists against their neighbors intensified when the British between 1940 and 1941 recruited 5,000 Turkana in their offensive against the Italians, Merile (Dassanetch) and Nyangatom (Dongiro). The British forces were victorious, and by extension the Turkana and occupied the Lower Omo Valley which today lies in Ethiopia driving away the Italian Mussolini forces. The Somali were also recruited mainly from Kismayu and used by the British in their expeditions of pacification against many pastoralist groups in the region between 1914 and 1936 (Aguilar, 1998:260-61; Nangulu, 2000: 23).

Livestock constitute the lifeline of the people in the Ilemi Triangle. Ilemi Triangle has witnessed internecine ethnic conflicts emanating from scarcity of resources, and as Lamphear has noted, "...desire to capture livestock, to gain access to natural resources" (Lamphear, 1994:69). Most often pastoralists fight among themselves. The fighting is usually to establish rights over pastureland and water where sharing rights have broken down due to misunderstandings or scarcity. But such sharing or pasture, water and even livestock is often negotiated. There are well-defined traditional systems of utilization of the grazing areas through well-defined migration routes and conservation of grass and watering points. When there is no alternative for negotiation especially when friendly neighbors have all lost herds, raiding becomes the only viable alternative for replenishing stock and for survival. Traditionally, raiding was a cultural enterprise carried out strictly for restocking purposes among pastoralists. Raiding was used to replenish depleted herds. After drought or when disease ravaged herds of one group, pastoralists often negotiated for seed stock among their neighbors which they paid back after replenishment and stability. As such raiding was a last resort when loaning system⁴ had failed or when the whole neighborhood where such seed animals could be borrowed were equally in short supply of livestock.

There was a lot of reciprocity in raiding where groups came together to help each other in restocking through voluntary exchange or raiding (Muller, 1989). Women and children were never killed during raids and calves were never taken in raids to help the raided groups to recover their herds. Where captives were taken, assimilation not annihilation of rival communities was usually the rule (Lamphear, 1994:69). Raiding was thus relatively humane. As such raiding was carried out under the command of elders who ensured that ethics were adhered to. Elders usually in opposition to the young men's aggressive tendencies, which might lead to unwelcome expansion of conflict and undercut the authority and pre-eminence of the older men. "War" Paul Baxter has remarked, "...was too serious a matter to be left to the young." The generation system, therefore, provided important means by which elders could exert authority over truculent juniors and impose strict limitations on warfare itself (Almogor, 1979; Baxter, 1979; Galaty, 1987).

⁴ Cattle's loaning is an ancient practice among pastoralists where one clan provided seed animals to a neighboring one for restocking. After herds recovered, an equal number of seed animals were usually returned to the lender. This was carried out between friendly pastoralist groups. Raiding was a last resort when such schemes had failed.

From his many years of study of pastoralists, Lamphear avers that "Most military activity took the form of intermittent raiding rather than anything like large-scale campaigns and typically it stemmed from a desire to capture livestock, to gain access to natural resources" (Lamphear, 1994:69). Escalation of violence in the region and increasing toll on human life in raids indicates breakdown of the traditional system of sanctity of human life and reciprocity in raiding among pastoralists. The new form of raiding is sometimes carried out for as obscure reasons as mere military reputation and prestige (Dent, 1977; Parker, 1988). A new hierarchy based on the potential and capacity to amass tools of violence, especially modern arms, in essence creation of warlords and bandits, has replaced elders leading to escalation of armed conflict (Amutabi, 1995, 1999).

More recently the problems in the Ethiopian State, especially the Ogaden war between Ethiopia and Somalia, and wars of liberation of the Eritreans, Tigreans and Oromo led to amassing of arms. In the Sudan, the Sudanese government has had intermittent clashes with Southern rebels since the Anyanya movement in 1952 and which was revived more earnestly with the SPLA activities from 1983 which not only avail arms in exchange for livestock but also provide market for the raided stock for rebel camps. The clan struggle for state power in Somalia in the 1990s has also led to flow of arms in the Triangle. In Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has impacted in the pastoralist lives in the entire northern rim of the country and which is near the Triangle through infiltration of arms and need for livestock for meat supply in the military camps (Amutabi, 1999).

Therefore, militarization has led to the amassing of arms by different ethnic groups for survival. The more sophisticated arms a group acquired compared to others in the region the more dominant it became. Thus the dominance of certain pastoralist groups in the region measured by building of herds and creation of grazing areas and access to watering points has a direct correlation to the availability of sophisticated arms compared to its neighbors. Thus, the arms rush, which started in the Triangle, has led to spillover effects spreading to the whole region. Today this area occupied by the Turkana, Gabra, Boran, Burji, Pokot, Rendille, El Molo, Shangilla, Oromo, Merile (Dassanetch), Mursi, Nyangatom (Dongiro), Bodi, Arsi, Toposa, Karimojong, Jie, Afar, the Somalia clan families of Degodia, Hawiye, Aulihyan, Darod, Mohammed Zuber (MD), Abduwak, Gashes, Ogaden, Issa, among others is steaming with automatic and sophisticated military gear that would put to envy many modern armies of some countries in Africa. Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Somalia have experienced the effects of the Triangle. This is one of the most volatile areas in Africa and has the greatest concentration of arms from the heaviest to the lightest.

Conflict among pastoralists in Eastern Africa recently has taken on new exaggerated dimensions. A shrinking resource base has provoked desperate struggles for survival, in which the very existence of these groups is threatened. Raiding and counter raiding for livestock has given way to commercial raiding. Commercial raiding has been brought about by the great demand for meat by the various combatants in the area. The combatants have included those from Somalia where there is internecine warring between various factions; in Southern Ethiopia the Oromo Liberation (OLF) front is engaged in a war of attrition with the Addis Ababa government; in Northern Kenya the Pokot livestock raiders are continuing their plunder and massacre in Turkana, Marakwet, Samburu and Rendille and Kenya's security personnel have lost the initiative and hope; in Southern Sudan the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) has believed since 1983 that it is on the verge of founding a new state; in Northern Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army has remained an enigma to Yoweri Museveni in Uganda.

Having depleted the area of its wild animals, livestock is the only resource readily available to the combatants and their neighbors who have been forced to build up their military arsenal to survive. These are the issues that this article addresses.

The Pastoralist Problem: Negotiating Against Adversity

The Horn of Africa "...is home to the largest remaining aggregation of traditional livestock producers in the world" (Markakis, 1998: 41). Ilemi Triangle and its fringe are home to one of the largest concentration of pastoralist economies in the world. Most of these pastoralist economies which are found in incredibly rugged terrain, punishing climate and extreme temperatures, vegetation covered with shrubs and needle-sharp thorns, rattle-snakes, centipedes, scorpions and other wild creatures and animals, are interconnected in ways that make nonsense of the so-called international border demarcations to minimize suffering. This makes the pastoralist regions to be less policed and their border areas more porous than other border points in the region.

There is hardly any major pastoral group that lives entirely within the boundaries of one state in Eastern Africa. Even where this is not the case, the group would have closely related groups across the border. Pastoralists on the border areas like the Turkana, Toposa, Merile, Karimojong, Boran have established alliances with their cousins across the border. In some cases like among the Oromo of Ethiopia and Somali of Kenya, they have joined liberation movement seeking separation or greater autonomy from the centralized states of the Eastern Africa. In other cases the individual groups have asserted their superiority over neighbors by use of arms through internecine raids. Despite this conflict there are continuous flows of people, arms and livestock across the borders through raids and smuggling and this has escalated raiding leading into bandit activities. These raids for livestock and subsequent counter raids and banditry can be attributed to several factors.

First, the pastoralists have no regard for international boundaries and consider them non-existent. They depend for their livelihood on an environment dictated by climatic conditions under whose mercy they operate, where seasonal movements through known migratory routes, pattern of pasture availability and water sources, established kinship networks, and long standing traditional cultural and political alliances provide the bases for their way of existence. The resources upon which pastoralists depend for their livelihood are spread sometimes beyond national boundaries. The state supervision of territorial boundaries interferes with pastoral survival based on seasonal movement in search of pasture and water. This is how Ilemi Triangle was carved out to avoid conflict over the water and pasture between the various groups in Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya. Territoriality and even notion of boundaries is therefore non-existent among many pastoralist groups.

In this regard for example, the Shangilla do not have permanent abode and move with their livestock between Kenya and Ethiopia in utilization of their traditional seasonal grazing and watering points and this is one of the ways through which arms infiltrate through the borders. On one of our visits to their area in Kenya found them on the Ethiopian side and during another visit, they had come back as a result of improved pasture due to rain. Those that I interviewed were non-committal about their nationality and preferred to leave the issue of citizenship as vague as possible. The Boran of Kenya are allied to the Oromo of Ethiopia under the Gada system which is a traditional structure linking Oromia speakers throughout the world. Thus they cross the

borders frequently in meeting the demands and exigencies of the Gada (Aguilar, 1998:257; Fugich, 1999:5).

The Nyangatom of the Lower Omo Valley are another example of a people whose traditional territory has been cut in two by an international boundary. The Nyakua River that has marked the border between Ethiopia and the Sudan since 1908, is in fact the center of the Nyangatom pastoral ecosystem, with Nyangatom (Dongiro) in Ethiopia and their Nyangatom cousins the Toposa in Sudan. Tornay says that "Since long before the Ethiopian troops of Menelek annexed the area of the Lower Omo Valley, at the turn of the century, the Nyangatom have been migrating with their herds to and from the western marches, thus maintaining close contact with their Sudanese cousins the Toposa" (Tornay, 1993:155). The Nyangatom and Toposa still keep cattle and often engage in cross border raids. The Anyuak found on both sides of Ethiopia and the Sudan constitutes another example of an ethnicity divided by arbitrary colonial boundaries in Eastern Africa (Perner, 1993: 125), and also engage in cross border raids.

Second, pastoralists live exclusively off the herd and its products. The recurrence of drought and famine in their terrain and various epidemics has made pastoralists increasingly dependent on the import of grain from other regions besides raiding. Their consumption patterns have changed, and in the recent past have been captured by global tastes as they have become depended on local and international markets to sell their livestock and livestock products in order to purchase grain and manufactured goods. The exchanges have gone beyond their traditional markets that were mainly the cultivators in their fringe with whom they traded. Nowadays pastoralists on the border usually extend their domain of trade to markets and urban centers across state boundaries where they get their supply of modern products. Some groups consider such markets a natural extension of their traditional territory and part of wider social and economic networks essential for their survival.

Unfortunately such markets, towns and surrounding areas have often been incorporated into the pastoralist realm and subjected to cross-border raids for food, livestock and arms. This is the fate that has befallen many towns in the pastoralist fringe, which have experienced sporadic pastoralist raids. Such towns include Kaabong and Loyoro in Uganda; Lokichokio, Kibish, Todentang, Sololo, Banisa, Malka Mari, Moyale and Rhamu in Kenya; Kelem, Mega, Chelago, Maji, Kibish, and Moyale in Ethiopia; Lutuke, Nagpotpot, Kapoeta, Loeli and Nagichot in Sudan. Small arms and other military gear are sold in many of these towns in underground markets and the pastoralists are known to be the avenues for the cross-border trading and channeling of these arms in Eastern Africa. Many respondents on conditions of anonymity admitted that such information on arms transfer and even whereabouts of markets were common and even known to security personnel of the respective countries. It appears that the security personnel have reluctantly accepted the position, the argument perhaps being that for a group to repulse raids from other ethnic groups in this region, strong arms are required. There were many cases where we spotted herds boys armed with AK-47 and other assault machine guns especially among the Turkana (Amutabi, 1999). At times these arms under these youthful hands are often put to reckless use by careless and ambitious youths for self-aggrandizement and even amusement in what is increasingly turning into bandit activities rather than raiding for livestock.

Raiding for livestock across ethnic and national borders among the pastoralists in Eastern Africa is legion (Amutabi, 1999; Turton, 1977, 1988, 1989, 1994; Fukui, 1994; Lamphear, 1994; Allen, 1994; Baxter, 1994; Tornay, 1993). These studies indicate the centrality of herds and related resources in pastoralist economy and survival. Tornay illustrates this when he shows how the Nyangatom (Dongiro) have been more or less continuously at war with almost all their

neighbors throughout their history. In an impressive chronology of raids and counter raids by the Nyangatom (Dongiro) over their neighbors like the Merile (Dassanetch), the Mursi, the Kara, the Bodo and the Turkana, Tornay illustrates the impact of livestock raiding in the military balance of the region (Tornay, 1993:143-163).

Third, the creation of national parks, game reserves and other wildlife conservation sanctuaries and schemes within the pastoralist ranges by governments has meant reduced grazing space and game meat supplements to pastoralist groups in Eastern Africa. There are several parks and game sanctuaries within a distance of 500 square kilometers of the Ilemi Triangle. These include Omo National Park, Tama Wildlife Reserve, Mago National Park and Stephanie Wildlife Reserve in Ethiopia, Sibiloi National Park in Kenya and Kidepo National Park in Uganda. There have often been armed and violent confrontations between pastoralists and park guards, game rangers and security personnel over park animals, especially during dry seasons when livestock numbers are down (Amutabi, 1999; Gufu, 1998). Less pasture has meant less and poor quality livestock herds. Prevention from hunting in the gazetted and protected game sanctuaries has meant that the traditional supplements of game meat have been eliminated. The whole pressure has therefore been transferred to the existing livestock and this has escalated cross-border raiding. To many pastoralists, it is easier to face fellow pastoralist groups in armed confrontation over livestock than engaging security personnel over wildlife meat. This has meant more raids for livestock than hunting for wildlife.

Fourth, the plight of the pastoralist has been exacerbated by the introduction of cultivation in the arid and semi-arid lands through irrigation. This process mainly fronted by foreign donor agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) keen on removing the dependency of pastoralists on aid and on the vulnerable livestock sector and meant to "empower" them as far as food supply is concerned, has deprived pastoralists valuable pasture. Permanent water sources have also been reduced through diversion of water into irrigation canals. Many seasonal rivers that are now increasingly used in irrigation schemes are rendered dry most of the year and this has led to death of many livestock occasioning more pressure on the few herds in the area. The result has been more raids and counter raids where livestock is always the common denominator. Tornay describes such a scheme in Kibish at Kangaten by World Vision an international NGO that allowed for the cultivation of some 25 hectares of sorghum by Nyangatom, Kara and Mursi and explains its incompatibility among these pastoralist peoples (Tornay, 1993:147).

Fifth, the reduction of pastoralist mobility has increasingly been restricted within each state by provincial, district and local boundaries for disease control and quarantines. This has limited circulation of livestock in the pastoralist range hence causing imbalance in the region. This also causes ecological disequilibrium (Coppock, 1994; Behnke, 1993; Helland, 1993; Scoones, 1995; Gufu, 1998). Too much building of herds in one area attracts the attention of raiders from areas of scarcity and this has been the fate of the Turkana of Kenya for example, in the 1990s. Due to improvement in veterinary services sponsored by foreign NGOs like the CARE International, OXFAM, Heifer International, among others, the Turkana have in the past ten years built up impressive stocks. It is within that period that the Turkana lost the highest number of lives in a single year in their recorded history. For example on a single day, on 6th September 1997 in Lokitang, the Turkana recorded one of the worst raids in their territory in the hands of their Merile neighbors. In that raid they lost over 7,000 goats and sheep, 400 camels and 42 people were killed (Amutabi, 1999: 4; *Daily Nation*, September 7, 1997:12).

Sixth, arms-acquisition in the region and the demand for livestock in military camps in the Oromo Liberation Movement (OLF) occupied areas in Ethiopia; in Southern Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) camps in Sudan; in various warlord camps in Somalia; in Lords Resistance Army (LRA) camps in Uganda, among others, have all exacerbated raiding for livestock in the region. The market dynamics have been altered by these new and increased demands. Thus livestock prices have been enhanced from the 1990s because the livestock were exchanged for arms or for money. Tornay reports that "Some Kibish people went to Sudan to exchange cattle for automatic weapons. They say that this way they acquired several hundred of these weapons and that they are now better armed than they have ever been..." (Tornay, 1993:148). Having superior arms meant easy access to livestock. This in turn promoted laziness and lack of incentive to build livestock numbers. Instead pastoralist groups focussed on building of arms and creation of raiding parties as the easy way out.

On availability of arms, Markakis asserts that "...in a region awash with automatic weapons, and large groups of heavily armed men waging political struggles from bases in the bush, conditions are not normal. Under these conditions, animals are likely to disappear completely from the vicinity (Markakis, 1998:46). Tornay reports that in 1991, "...twenty five young Nyangatom (Merile) had been trained in an EPRDF (Ethiopia Peoples' Republic Democratic Front) camp in Awasa and they had been sent back to their country with Kalashnikovs, as purely tribal militia, committed to maintain local order under the guidance of their elders" (Tornay, 1993:151). He reports also that "...the Sudanese Toposa have made an alliance with the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA), from which they acquired automatic weapons" (Tornay, 1993:148). Even after the end of the civil war in Ethiopia, the Toposa still seem to have a reservoir of arms and often raid the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda for cattle. This has made the Kenya-Sudan-Uganda border to remain volatile. This is not the only the area that is volatile in the region.

Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya is also volatile. It is not surprising that from the Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya border area in the east to the Sudan-Kenya-Ethiopia border area in the west, one notices an increasing number of families that have completely been de-stocked through raids and reduced to destitution. These families have fled their homelands across borders like Ethiopians, Sudanese and Somali refugees in Kenya, and Kenyan refugees in Ethiopia. Other de-stocked pastoralists have resigned themselves into internal refugees in camps around churches or crowded into peri-urban slums in the region. Commenting on this arms building in the area, Perner has remarked "The fact that insurgent groups have, through the years of struggle and war, acquired a great amount of sophisticated weapons is of great concern in this respect" (Perner, 1993:133).

At the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) camp at Kakuma, in Turkana in northern Kenya, there are very many de-stocked destitute Turkana families outside the camp, numbering almost half of the refugees inside the camp. These Turkana families depend on handouts for survival, as relief has become their main source of sustenance and occasionally carrying out menial tasks around and inside the camp for little pay. The same to Dadaab and Hagdera UNHCR refugee camps in northeastern where there are many Kenyan internal refugees besides the Somali and Ethiopian refugees. Owino Opondo reported in the Daily Nation of 21 January 2001 that more than 600 Burji, Gabra and Boran families had fled their Moyale constituency homes following invasions from the Ethiopia side of the border. Many ended up in Walda Refugee camp that has been building up in refugee numbers from Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. On escalation of bandit attacks, the Moyale Member of Parliament reported in

Opondo's report above said that "Six villages in my constituency are now desolate as residents have fled their homes and are camping at the Moyale divisional headquarters," (Opondo, 2001). The affected villages were Kiltipe, Uran, Lataka, Uran Dida, Badanota and Kicha that are on the Kenyan side of the border with Ethiopia. Thus the economies of the pastoralist groups in the region have been destroyed and their homelands depopulated.

Seventh, improved marketing for livestock and their products in the region and external markets has led to greater demand. This has led to cartels and very aggressive middlemen in livestock marketing. Because of scarcity of livestock in traditional areas due to raiding, these cartels and middlemen organize and sponsor their own raids by hiring mercenaries and bandits to execute their schemes. Thus traditional raiding custom and "etiquette" where children and women were spared and male casualties limited, have been eliminated and replaced with merciless raiding practices by private armies where a whole family or clan can be completely wiped out in a single raid. The armies engage in bandit activities when not raiding for livestock and the result has been escalation of insecurity in the region. Reports of attacks carried out with uncanny military precision are legion in the region.

In June 1971 Merile (Dassanetch) herdsmen massacred at least 200 Dongiro (Nyangatom) from several Kibish settlements in a single attack (Tornay, 1993:144). Turton visited the Mursi in December 1987 and reported that the Nyangatom had massacred a large Mursi settlement on February 21st, 1987 (Turton, 1993). The report by Tornay of an attack by the Nyangatom on a Kenyan police station at Kibish demonstrates how courageous these groups have become. Such attacks on police stations and military installations have become more common in the region in the recent past (Amutabi, 1999).

In July 1999 a daredevil military raid occurred simultaneously in Moyale town on the Kenyan and Ethiopian side where property of unknown value was stolen. The Ethiopian government blamed the attack on the rebel Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) militia but the Kenyan authorities laid the blame on Ethiopian security personnel. In January Ethiopian bandits attacked and abducted Kenya policeman after ambushing a Government security team at Kiltipe. Eight Kenya police officers and two residents were killed in the attack. The abducted policeman was allegedly being held at Bokuluboma, about 140 kilometers into Ethiopia (Opondo, 2001). The OLF, a militia outfit has fought the Addis Ababa regime for more than five years. The Ethiopian government has been accusing Nairobi of hosting the OLF, whose troops it pursues deep into the Kenyan side, leaving a trail of deaths and loss of property.

On July 7, 2001 the *Daily Nation* newspaper reported that five people had been killed in a weeklong violence between Turkana of Kenya and Toposa of Sudan on their common border. Two catholic nuns were also raped and livestock stolen. It was reported that the raiding had started on the previous week when Turkana raiders killed a Toposa youth on the Sudanese side. The Toposa hit back at Turkana pastoralists in Lokichokio town and stole more than 400 head of cattle. The report said that "Two of the raiders, described as *notorious criminals*, (my emphasis) were killed in the attack and three guns recovered by Turkana herdsmen" (*Daily Nation*, 7 July 2001). The report goes further and says that, "Toposa *bandits* (my emphasis) later attacked three vehicles travelling to Lokichokio town, looted luggage and raped two Catholic nuns travelling in one of the vehicles belonging to the Diocese of Torit" (ibid.). This story confirms that raiding is no longer carried out under the traditional auspices of replenishing of pastoralist stock but purely malicious and selfish, even satanic motives like rape and looting of non-pastoralist items.

On May 11, 2001, the *Daily Nation* carried a feature article on what it termed "Kenya's Kosovo", which is a stretch of land in a place known as Baragoi next to the Kenya-Ethiopia-

Sudan border on the fringe of the Ilemi Triangle. Because of the prevalence of too many dangerous arms previously used in livestock raids and counter raids and now used on ethnic altercations, the area has been called Kenya's Kosovo reminiscent to the Kosovo, a war-torn nation in former Yugoslavia. The story pointed out that because of banditry, Baragoi which lies in a purely pastoralist zone was one of the most dangerous places in Kenya. Baragoi is just a few kilometers from Suguta Valley, a security nightmare to security personnel in Kenya and a haven of livestock thieves and bandits from Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan. Because of this valley's treacherous terrain and unbearable temperatures, heat index and humidity, Kenya's security personnel even local people like the Samburu fear it and all readily admit so. "Even children know this. They welcome visitors chanting: 'Welcome to Kosovo! Baragoi is Kosovo!' "(Agutu and Kariuki, 2001). In 1996 a helicopter carrying senior Kenya government officials together with the then Samburu District Commissioner James Nyandoro on a security mission was blown into smithereens by bandits in Suguta Valley (Amutabi, 1999).

Agutu and Kariuki assert that "For five years now Baragoi residents have suffered all manner of war – from *bandit attacks* (my emphasis) to cattle rustling to *thuggery* (my emphasis). All the aggressors wield AK-47 assault rifles and other arms, ever ready to fire" (Agutu and Kariuki, *Ibid.*). The government of Kenya has responded by deploying battery of military equipment and personnel into the area yet the killings continue unabated. The area has become a military operation zone where, "groups of people travelling along the Baragoi-Maralal route must have armed escort. Barely a week passes without a convoy being attacked by bandits (my emphasis) hiding in the harsh terrain of the 200km stretch. In the beginning it was mere cattle rustling. Rarely would raiders kill. Then banditry followed. No one is spared, including women and children. And now robbers have set camp, looting homes and shops without a care in the world" (*Ibid.*). Many of the major roads in the region are under siege, suffering banditry attacks. The Nanyuki-Maralal road and the Baragoi-Maralal road are notorious for bandit attacks. Despite assurances by government officials over the years, that security has been improved, the roads remain insecure.

Concluding Remarks

From the foregoing, certain recommendations and concluding remarks can be made. Due to escalation of violence in the Ilemi Triangle and its environs, some pastoralist communities are threatened with imminent extinction in this anarchistic survival of the fittest. The ethnic centers of most of the pastoralist groups in Eastern Africa have shifted in the past twenty years due to raids and fear of counter-raids. Since these groups fallaciously believe that the panacea for their survival is acquisition of more sophisticated arms more than their neighbors, they are building death traps in which they might all perish. Fear and uncertainty now reigns in the region. One encounters wide unutilized corridors between these groups. These corridors which are unintentionally abandoned forming buffer zones which would be better utilized for grazing purposes. Therefore the groups are finding themselves occupying less space as they push away from areas of contact. The area between Kenya's Turkana and Uganda's Karimojong is a virtual empty space, the same to the border area between the Turkana and the Toposa of Sudan and the Turkana and the Dongiro and the Merile of Ethiopia on their common borders. There is a chain reaction sequence that results from this shifting of spaces. In Ethiopia, as the Nyangatom and the Dassanetch who neighbor the Kenyan Turkana push themselves northwards, they in turn push away their northern neighbors like the Kara, Beshada, Hamar, Koegu, Kwegu, Mursi, Bodi, etc. The Turkana have also caused the Samburu, Rendille, El Molo and Pokot to adjust their ethnic

space within Kenya. Similarly the Karimojong push inside Uganda as a result of withdrawal from border areas has impacted on the space of the Jie, the Labwor and the Dodos.

Stock theft, raiding, rustling or banditry and killing of humans has escalated to very dangerous levels not just in the Ilemi Triangle but in Eastern Africa as a whole. Security of the region is in great danger of going out of hand, as not all the governments in the region are fully committed to the eradication of insecurity in the area. Some of the governments are not to blame because they do not have full control of pastoralist areas like the case of the Sudan. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has not been able to come up with a working formula of forestalling armed conflict in the area. The governments in the region must spend more funds in arming their security personnel beyond the traditional G.3 rifles if they expect their presence to be felt in this very militarized zone, and operate joint policing of the region. Air power especially helicopters and other superior combat gear should be considered. Any government must have monopoly of force if it has to succeed in restoring control of an area such as Ilemi Triangle.

Military garrisons and police posts should be increased in the areas adjacent to the Triangle in Uganda, Ethiopia, the New Sudan and Kenya. The use of armed village vigilante groups should also be encouraged as they will deter raiding by bands who sneak behind government security forces. Pastoralists should be made to understand that it is they who will determine their own fate. Later on each government should be entrusted to disarm their pastoralists when they eventually attain full control of them. Armed conflict among the Karimojong has gone down when all Karimojong adults were trained and armed in the highly successful "chakamachaka" (village vigilante) program. The only danger has been that when the same Uganda government wanted to disarm them for attacking unarmed groups within Uganda, the Karimojong repulsed government forces. Karimojong hold over one million guns, which are less than those held by government soldiers, for government troops hold less than half a million.

The governments in the region should also introduce sophisticated methods of branding, labeling or tagging and identification of animals. Microcomputer chips with an electronic code number for each animal as is currently done in Denmark, New Zealand and Australia and in South Africa to track down herds should be implanted in pastoralist animals through incisions on ears, necks, etc. This will help in tracking down stolen animals even across national borders. This will help in making identification of stolen animals easy, and stock theft will become a futile endeavor. Perennial raiders like Nyangatom, Toposa, Karimojong, Jie, Turkana and Pokot will settle down to producing their own animals than their current reliance on stock theft in the region. In this case, veterinary officers who have been rendered jobless in the region should be used to vet the identity of every animal slaughtered or exported by verifying information from the microchips.

The government of Kenya should take full control of the Ilemi Triangle as per the agreement of 1924 that ceded the area to the control of colonial British government in Kenya. If the countries of the Nile Valley are insisting that the Nile waters agreement signed between the colonial authorities on the use of the Nile waters stands, then similarly the Kitgum-Ilemi Agreement of 1924 should be respected. The Toposa, Nyangatom and other groups in the Triangle should be pacified and made to obey laws and rules governing states in which they graze their livestock. Pastoralists in the region should be taught to respect private property and sanctity of human life, which they have made nonsense of in the recent past.

The NGOs should be given more leeway in bringing about peace through mediation, conflict resolution and poverty reduction strategies. NGOs and Community Based Organizations

(CBOs) operate among these groups on every day basis and even have ways of knowing the belligerent and recalcitrant elements. Raiding escalates in periods of acute scarcity. Thus poverty eradication programs like restocking, drilling of bore-holes, building of dams and rain water harvest projects, improvement of roads in pastoralist regions, close policing, establishment of village banks, among other s should be used to reduce conflict. The governments have parceled out traditional pastoralist grazing areas and hunting grounds and converted them into wildlife sanctuaries which ear them a lot of income from tourism. They should plow back these incomes into pastoralist areas.

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