



Issue no: 01 | Vol no: 06 | August 2026: 20-30

Reasons Behind the Persistence of Cattle Raiding in Pokot Community

Fredrick Kipro Kiptoo 

Kabarak university, Kenya

Author's email: kiptoof@kabarak.ac.ke

Article History

Received: 2026.06.15

Accepted: 2026.07.09

Published: 2026.08.13

Cite this article in APA

Kiptoo, F. K. (2026). Reasons behind the persistence of cattle raiding in Pokot community. *Editon consortium journal of philosophy, religion and theological studies*, 6(1), 20-30. <https://doi.org/10.51317/ecjprts.v6i1.744>

Abstract

This study investigated the reasons behind the persistence of cattle raiding in the Pokot community. The study sought to identify factors contributing to the continued practice of cattle raiding despite government efforts to curb it. A descriptive survey design was employed. The population of believers in AIC Loiwat District Church was approximately 750, from which 50 respondents were selected from nine local churches. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to pastors, teachers, church elders, church women and church youth. Of the 50 questionnaires distributed, 46 were returned, representing a 92 per cent response rate. The findings identified seven factors associated with the persistence of cattle raiding: illiteracy, incitement by politicians, expansion of land for grazing, cultural practices in which raiding may confer heroic status, the availability of sophisticated weapons, motivation by diviners, soothsayers and fortune tellers, and knowledge imparted during initiation ceremonies. The findings also associated marriage cultural norms and boundary disputes with the persistence of cattle raiding. The study concludes that the persistence of cattle raiding is associated with a combination of educational, political, territorial, cultural, material and traditional factors. The study recommends strengthening security and enforcement measures, improving educational opportunities, promoting peace through collaboration among the church, government and community, and developing alternative opportunities through irrigation farming and technical education.

Key words: Cattle raiding, cultural values, illiteracy, initiation, politicking, sophisticated weapons.



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INTRODUCTION

Cattle raiding has remained a persistent challenge in pastoral areas of northern Kenya, including Baringo County. The practice has affected communities through the loss of livestock, insecurity, displacement and disruption of social and economic activities. In the North Rift, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) has documented insecurity-related concerns, including unresolved boundary grievances, inter-community conflict, displacement and disruption of learning. These conditions demonstrate that cattle raiding and related insecurity extend beyond the loss of livestock and have wider consequences for affected communities (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights [KNCHR], 2017).

Research on pastoral communities in the region indicates that cattle raiding has multiple causes rather than a single explanation. Cheserek et al. (2012), in their study of the Pokot and Marakwet communities in Baringo East and Marakwet East, identified the availability of guns, commercialisation of cattle raids, political incitement, poverty, traditional values and illiteracy among the factors associated with cattle rustling. Their findings also associated cattle rustling with socio-economic consequences such as migration and changes in livelihoods. These findings are relevant to the present study because they demonstrate that cattle raiding in the Kerio Valley involves social, economic, political and material dimensions.

The nature of cattle raiding has also changed over time. Greiner (2013), drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in East Pokot and surrounding areas, shows that livestock raiding has increasingly been conducted with modern weapons and has become connected to political claims over administrative boundaries and struggles over access to land. The study further demonstrates that raiding can become connected to electoral politics and the mobilisation of ethnic constituencies. This perspective is important in understanding contemporary cattle raiding because it places the practice within changing political and territorial circumstances rather than treating it only as a traditional activity.

Culture remains another dimension of cattle raiding in the Pokot context. Nganga (2012), in a study of conflict in West Pokot, argues that cultural beliefs surrounding cattle raiding are relevant to understanding the persistence of the practice. At the same time, the study identifies other contributing factors, including the

proliferation of illegal arms, competition over pasture and water, political incitement, poverty, youth idleness and territorial control. Culture should therefore be considered alongside other social, political, economic and security factors rather than treated as an isolated explanation for conflict.

The relationship between cattle raiding, insecurity and access to land is also evident in more recent research from Baringo County. Kovač and Schulz (2023), focusing on Il Chamus men, report that contemporary insecurity in the area is understood by their interlocutors in relation to local and national politics, economic conditions and access to land, rather than simply as a continuation of a cattle-raiding tradition. Their study also documents displacement and loss of life associated with attacks involving Pokot and Il Chamus communities. Because their study focuses on the Il Chamus rather than the Pokot community, its relevance to the present study is primarily contextual: it demonstrates the wider political, economic and territorial setting in which cattle raiding and insecurity occur in Baringo County.

The persistence of cattle raiding despite efforts to address the practice therefore calls for attention to the specific factors that continue to sustain it within the Pokot community. The present study focuses on factors identified within the study context, including illiteracy, political influence, the need for grazing land, cultural practices, sophisticated weapons, traditional spiritual motivation and initiation practices. The study sought to investigate the reasons behind the persistence of cattle raiding in the Pokot community in order to provide information that would aid the church in efforts to curb the practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Illiteracy and Cattle Raiding

Education and literacy have been discussed as factors influencing participation in cattle raiding and other forms of conflict among pastoral communities. Limited access to formal education may restrict opportunities for alternative livelihoods and employment, particularly among young people whose daily activities are strongly connected to livestock keeping. Nyamboga and Kiplang'at (2008) associate education with opportunities for young people and suggest that increased participation in schooling can reduce exposure to conflict-related activities.

Cheserek et al. (2012), in their study of pastoral communities in Baringo East and Marakwet East, identified illiteracy among the factors associated with cattle rustling. However, their findings place illiteracy alongside other factors, including poverty, traditional values, political incitement, the availability of firearms and the commercialisation of cattle rustling. This suggests that educational disadvantage is better understood as one element within a broader set of conditions associated with cattle raiding.

The relationship between education and cattle raiding is therefore not necessarily direct. Limited educational opportunities may coexist with economic pressures, cultural expectations and restricted livelihood alternatives. A consideration of education within the wider social environment is consequently important when examining factors associated with cattle raiding.

Political Influence and Cattle Raiding

Political influence has been identified as an important dimension of cattle raiding and inter-community conflict in northern Kenya. Greiner (2013), drawing on research in East Pokot, demonstrates that livestock raiding has become connected to political competition, administrative boundary claims and struggles over territorial control. The study shows that contemporary raiding cannot be understood solely as a continuation of customary pastoral practices because political processes have influenced the organisation and meaning of conflict. Cheserek et al. (2012) similarly identify political incitement among the factors associated with cattle rustling in Baringo East and Marakwet East. Political influence is therefore presented alongside economic, cultural and material factors rather than as an independent explanation of cattle raiding.

In West Pokot, Nganga (2012) also identifies political incitement among the factors associated with conflict, together with competition over pasture and water, illegal arms, poverty, youth idleness, inadequate policing and territorial control. The literature consequently suggests that political mobilisation may interact with existing social and resource-related tensions in sustaining conflict.

Poverty and Economic Factors

Economic conditions constitute another important dimension in explanations of cattle raiding. Poverty can limit access to alternative sources of livelihood and increase dependence on livestock as a principal economic

resource. In communities where livestock represents an important form of wealth, cattle may acquire both economic and social value.

Cheserek et al. (2012) identify poverty among the factors associated with cattle rustling in Baringo East and Marakwet East. Their findings, however, demonstrate that poverty operates alongside other factors, including illiteracy, political incitement, traditional values, firearms and the commercialisation of cattle rustling.

The commercialisation of cattle raiding further illustrates the economic dimension of the practice. Cheserek et al. (2012) identify commercialisation as one of the factors associated with cattle rustling, indicating that livestock raiding may be connected to economic interests beyond immediate subsistence needs. Greiner (2013) similarly demonstrates that contemporary livestock raiding in northern Kenya has been shaped by broader political and economic transformations.

Land, Grazing Resources and Boundary Disputes

Access to grazing land and water is a recurring concern in pastoral communities and has been associated with inter-community conflict. Competition over pastoral resources can become particularly significant where communities occupy neighbouring territories and depend on the same grazing and water resources.

Greiner (2013) links livestock raiding in East Pokot and surrounding areas to struggles over land and administrative boundaries. His analysis demonstrates how territorial claims can become intertwined with cattle raiding, political competition and changing systems of territorial administration.

Nganga (2012) likewise identifies competition over pasture and water and territorial control among factors associated with conflict in West Pokot. These findings indicate that resource competition should be understood within wider political and social relationships rather than as an isolated environmental problem.

Kovač and Schulz (2023), examining insecurity among Il Chamus men in Baringo County, also demonstrate the significance of land, political and economic conditions in contemporary insecurity. Their findings provide broader contextual evidence from Baringo County, although their research population was Il Chamus rather than Pokot.

Law Enforcement and Security

The effectiveness of law-enforcement and security institutions is another issue raised in the literature on cattle raiding. Inadequate policing can limit the ability of authorities to prevent raids, protect communities and respond effectively to attacks.

Nganga (2012) identifies inadequate policing and weaknesses in security arrangements among the factors associated with conflict in West Pokot. These factors occur alongside illegal arms, political incitement, competition over pasture and water, poverty and territorial control. The findings suggest that security responses form part of a wider institutional and social environment influencing conflict.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (2017) similarly documents insecurity in the North Rift region and discusses its consequences, including inter-community conflict, boundary grievances, displacement and disruption of education. Such evidence demonstrates that cattle raiding and related insecurity have consequences extending beyond livestock losses to affect wider community welfare and social institutions.

Cultural Values and Cattle Raiding

The Bible is supra-cultural; it sheds light on bad cultural elements that are considered valuable by those who practice them. Some cultural values may be considered evil in one community but not bad in another community, such as cattle rustling and female genital mutilation. Each society has its cultural norms and values which are accepted to regulate people's behaviour.

There are ceremonies like marriage, coronation of elders and initiation which require goats in exchange and for feasting (Tuitok, 2010, pp. 69–76). In marriage, for example, a number of goats and cows were given as dowry. Other communities have developed new economic ways of paying bride price rather than many animals.

Richard Gehman claims that, “Christians need to exchange the beliefs and values of African Traditional Religion, which are contrary to Biblical Revelation, and adopt Biblical world view” (Gehman, 2005, pp. 28–29). African culture entails both good and bad elements; there are those which are supported by the Scriptures and those which are not. Hospitality, for example, is an element in which Africans excel and which the Bible also teaches (Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9).

Kato (1987) observes that, if religion is what gives direction to life, Christianity must necessarily change the lifestyle or culture of Africa. Africans dance and sing heroic songs to celebrate warriors who win in a raid or hunting, while those who fail are neglected even by their own women. This generates power that Mazrui refers to as “the ability to influence predisposition, feelings, beliefs and actions” (Mazrui, 1977, pp. 113–188). Cultural values should be of true morality, true civilisation, and true progress, which are always found together (Gandhi, 1968, p. 8).

Nganga (2012) examines the cultural foundations of conflict in West Pokot and identifies cultural beliefs as one dimension of cattle raiding. Importantly, the study does not explain conflict exclusively through culture; political, economic, environmental and security factors are also considered. This broader interpretation suggests that cultural practices need to be examined in relation to changing social and political conditions.

Historical accounts of cattle raiding among the Pokot have also associated successful raiders with social recognition and heroic status. Such recognition may be expressed through names, songs and other forms of community acknowledgement. The social meaning attached to cattle raiding therefore provides an important context for understanding why the practice may persist even when it produces wider insecurity.

Sophisticated Weapons and Cattle Raiding

The availability of firearms has significantly influenced the contemporary character of cattle raiding in northern Kenya. Greiner (2013) demonstrates that modern weaponry has altered the scale and nature of livestock raiding and contributed to the escalation of violent encounters.

Cheserek et al. (2012) similarly identify guns among the factors associated with cattle rustling in Baringo East and Marakwet East. The convergence of these findings indicates that the availability of firearms is an important material dimension of contemporary cattle raiding.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (2017) also documents the role of firearms within insecurity in the North Rift. The proliferation of weapons can therefore increase the capacity for violent attacks and intensify the security consequences associated with cattle raiding.

Synthesis of the Literature

The literature reviewed demonstrates that cattle raiding is a multidimensional phenomenon associated with educational, economic, political, cultural, territorial and security factors. Studies among Pokot and neighbouring pastoral communities identify illiteracy, poverty, political incitement, traditional values, firearms and commercialisation among factors associated with cattle rustling (Cheserek et al., 2012). Research in East Pokot further connects livestock raiding with land, administrative boundaries, modern weaponry and electoral politics (Greiner, 2013), while research in West Pokot highlights the interaction of cultural beliefs with political, economic, environmental and security conditions (Nganga, 2012).

The literature therefore does not support a single-factor explanation of cattle raiding. Rather, the persistence and changing character of the practice appear to be associated with the interaction of cultural practices, resource competition, political processes, economic conditions, access to firearms and institutional responses. This body of literature provides a foundation for examining the factors associated with the continued practice of cattle raiding in the Pokot context.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was used. The study was conducted among believers in AIC Loiwat District Church (DCC), whose population was approximately 750. The DCC comprised nine local churches and was served by eight pastors, including three trained pastors and five untrained pastors (elders). A systematic sampling procedure was used to select 50 respondents from the nine local churches. Each church provided at

least one participant, while the larger churches provided between three and seven participants. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to pastors, church elders, teachers, church women and church youth. The questionnaires contained open-ended and closed-ended questions. Before data collection, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Dean of Theology and sought consent from the District Church Council Chairman. Respondents were given two weeks to complete the questionnaires, after which the researcher collected them at agreed times and locations. The collected data were sorted, edited, entered, processed, classified, cleaned, organised and checked for completeness and internal consistency before interpretation according to the research questions. Data were presented using essays, bar charts, pie charts and tables. Ethical procedures involved informing participants about the study's purpose, protecting their privacy through confidentiality and pseudonyms, securing the necessary research authorisation, and emphasising that participation was voluntary. Respondents were also informed of their right to omit any question they did not wish to answer.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed to pastors, teachers, church elders, church women and church youth, of which 46 were returned, giving a response rate of 92 per cent. The findings identified seven factors associated with the persistence of cattle raiding: illiteracy, incitement by politicians, expansion of land for grazing, cultural practices, availability of sophisticated weapons, motivation by diviners/soothsayers and imparted knowledge during initiation. The findings on these factors are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Causes of Cattle Rustling (F=Frequency & P=Percentage)

Respondents' opinions	Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%	F	P%
Illiteracy	0	0	0	0	4	8.7%	42	91.3%
Incitement by politicians	1	4%	0	0	6	13.04%	37	80.4%
Expansion of land for grazing	2	4%	0	0	6	13%	38	83%
Cultural practice	4	8.7%	0	0	0	0	42	91.3%
Presence of sophisticated weapons	0	0	0	0	4	8.7%	42	91.3%
Motivation by diviners/soothsayers	0	0	0	0	7	15.2%	39	84.8%
Imparted knowledge in initiation	0	0	0	0	8	17.4%	38	82.6%

Illiteracy

The findings show that 91.3 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that illiteracy is one of the major causes of the persistence of cattle raiding in Pokot, while 8.7 per cent agreed. There was no percentage for those who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Illiteracy is one of the worst dangers to any society. Most of the time, leaders encourage pastoralist communities to provide their children with education instead of engaging in cattle rustling. It is evident that children who do not go to school are at risk of involving themselves in stealing for livelihood. Mandela commented that the only way the child of a peasant farmer can become a president is through education (Batai, personal communication, May 4, 2014).

Wanjohi and Wanjohi (2005) emphasised that “education must be provided for all” (p. 158). Pastors who attended a prayer meeting held in Maoi, Baringo County, from the Pokot sub-tribe shared that those who steal are young boys who do not go to school (Maoi-1, personal communication, June 5, 2015). It is acknowledged in the community that there are illiterate young boys who feel proud when they raid. Illiteracy therefore has been a major contributing factor to the persistence of cattle raiding.

Political Causes

According to the findings, politics and politicians have played a significant role in inciting the public to violence. PLO Lumumba noted that “the ethical and moral institutional pillars of our society are at very best dead where they are not rotten” (Lumumba, 2008, p. xvii). One of the institutions Lumumba refers to is the political institution. When political institutions fail to uphold ethical standards, moral decay in society may be expected.

This is exactly what is happening in the community, the reason being that all communities surrounding the Pokot community cry out about attacks, raiding and killings of their people by raiders from the Pokot community. In Pokot, people listen more to their political leaders than even to spiritual leaders; whatever a politician says is powerful and effective. It seems the politicians have known this secret of influencing the Pokot through leadership positions.

On 29 October 2014, Baringo County Assembly Speaker Kassait Kamket was arrested by officers from the

Directorate of Criminal Investigations at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in connection with recent killings in Baringo. Kamket stated that he suspected his arrest was connected to the prevailing violence in Baringo, explaining that he had been informed that Inspector-General of Police David Kimaiyo had identified him and two other county assembly members as suspects at a recent function in Baringo. Kamket was referring to remarks made by Kimaiyo on 26 October 2014 during a function in Chemolingot, the headquarters of Tiaty Constituency. Kamket stated that he supported police investigations into the clashes and called for authorities to investigate the recurring clashes along the Baringo–Turkana boundary and persistent cattle raids (Kariuki, 2014)

Expansion of Land for Grazing

From Table 1, 83 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that expansion of land for grazing contributes to the persistence of cattle rustling, while 13 per cent agreed and 4 per cent disagreed. There was no percentage for those who strongly disagreed.

Elder (A) commented that, “During the dry season we Pokots have to move and look for a grazing field for the animals just like any other nomadic communities are doing.” The respondent further said, “If they don’t do so, then their animals would die, and any community resisting causes our ‘morans’ to use force”. The only difference is that other communities do not fight to acquire more grazing land, as we see in the Pokot community.

Boundary Disputes

Boundary disputes emerged as a significant source of tension among the communities in the study area. Politicians frequently raise boundary-related concerns during media interviews. One respondent stated, “Kapedo is ours; it doesn’t belong to Turkana.” Such claims were often supported by references to former councillors, chiefs, and other local administrators who were said to have exercised jurisdiction over particular areas.

Both communities claimed that their ancestral land had been occupied by the other community and that the boundary was being altered. The intensity of the dispute was evident when political leaders from the two communities clashed during a live television interview. One caller, reacting to the exchange, remarked, “If it is

this way in a live broadcast interview, how tense is it on the ground?”

Residents of Kapedo who identify as Turkana maintain that they live on their ancestral land. However, some Pokots dispute this claim and have attempted to evict them. Kapedo is one of the areas that has featured prominently in reports on the longstanding boundary and resource disputes between the Pokot and Turkana communities. The area was also associated with severe violence, including the killing of 21 police officers and three civilians in 2014 (Koskei & Netya, 2014).

In Baringo North Constituency, Pokot community members reportedly claimed that their boundary extended through Kipsaraman and Kampiyasi on the western side. However, respondents maintained that the officially recognised boundary was clearly indicated in the 2010 Kenya Population and Housing Census.

The border dispute has also been linked to displacement and recurrent cattle raids along the Turkana–Pokot border. During discussions on the conflict, the Loima Constituency MP, Protus Akuja, decried rampant cattle rustling and reported that dozens of people had been displaced by raids in his constituency. He stated that many families had fled areas including Lorengippi, Naipa, Ulukuse, Moruongor, and Kotaruk because of fears of further attacks. Similarly, Turkana South MP James Lomenen identified the Turkana–Pokot border dispute as a major source of conflict between the two communities and called on the Government to address the dispute amicably and urgently.

The Tugen community was also reported to be defending areas that the Pokot community claimed as its own, despite respondents' assertion that the boundaries were stipulated in the 2010 Kenya Population and Housing Census. The dispute is further complicated by the nature of cattle raids. According to the researcher, raiders may attack villages, kill residents, burn property, and seize livestock, leaving affected families with little option but to flee their homes. Such displacement, in turn, creates opportunities for the raiders to occupy or utilise the abandoned land. The researcher also reported having personally accommodated people who had been displaced by such attacks in his locality.

Cultural Value: Where One Is Considered a Hero After Raiding

The respondents indicated that cultural practices contribute to the promotion of the vice, with 91.3 per cent strongly agreeing and 8.7 per cent disagreeing. Stealing from members of one's own community is considered wrong, whereas taking livestock from another community may be perceived as an act of heroism. It is wrong to do evil to one's people, but not so evil whenever one does it to a neighbour. It is heroic when one brings wealth home from another community.

According to the study done by KHRC (2010), cultural practices are a major cause of cattle rustling since the practice is deeply entrenched, with young men known as morans stealing livestock either as a show of heroism or for restocking for payment of dowries.

One of the respondents (LA) commented that, “it is very shameful if you haven't gone through the ceremonial feast called ‘sabana’”. He further said that, “you cannot be respected in elders' forums or even allowed to address the locals”.

It is a ceremony whereby the “initiates” are promoted to be community elders after some elders perform rituals. It involves feasting and drinking, dancing and singing songs of praise to the Hero. Initiates in the ceremony are crowned in “sabana” to be an elder with instruments of honour. A man in the Pokot community who has not gone through “sabana” is not respected as such. Even those who want to lead must go through it so that they can have a say in the community. After the ceremony, the community elders offer cultural instructions which influence young men to be bound culturally.

Another respondent (LB) narrated that, “it is very difficult to change our people who like this ceremony”. This therefore becomes one of the cultural practices which contribute a lot to the stealing of livestock by some Pokot young men.

Marriage Cultural Norm

Payment of dowry is another issue that culturally has caused the persistence of the vice. Cappon (2004), in a report, notes that “the traditional practice of raiding for pride price, restocking and redistribution of wealth has been transformed into commercial raiding, which feeds cattle trading networks” (p. 18).

In Africa, dowry “is fixed with so many goats and cows,” as was highlighted by Wanjohi and Wanjohi (2005, p. 40). A Pokot girl is highly valued, which is very good, but it is expensive for young men who have not accumulated wealth. One of the respondents (LC) commented that “a girl in our community is like gold, because we get cows and goats through them”.

A girl is worth twelve cows and twenty-four goats, though negotiable in the present generation. This requirement in the Pokot community forces young men to steal. It has reached a time when Pokot elites, politicians and spiritual leaders should view things differently. Bad cultural elements need to be reinterpreted from a biblical perspective. Marriage is not selling girls or barter trading; it is bonding a relationship between the two families and appreciating the bride's family and clan members.

Availability of Sophisticated Weapons

The research findings revealed that sophisticated weapons were one of the causes of cattle raiding. From the analysis of Table 1, a major cause of cattle rustling is the availability of sophisticated weapons, which has been found to trigger cattle rustling for many years. 91.3 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed, while 8.7 per cent agreed that possession of sophisticated weapons had contributed greatly to the persistence of cattle rustling in the Pokot community. Illicit arms and light weapons can easily be obtained and transported from one place to another.

A report by Cappon (2004) writes that “because of insecurity communities are forced to acquire ever more sophisticated weapons to arm themselves against aggression” (p. 18). Furthermore, it comments that “the availability of firearms and ammunition has greatly contributed to the escalation of conflicts in Kerio Valley, and the government ineptitude at controlling the trade in firearms has been queried” (Cappon, 2004, p. 24).

A significant amount of literature shows that guns did not play a prominent role in the military organisation of many East African pastoral and semi-pastoral communities (Mazrui, 1977, p. 4).

Today, however, new forms of banditry and cattle rustling have emerged, over which the elders have no control. In the last two decades, a number of pastoral societies have become militarised and increasingly rely on firearms (Wainaina, 2012).

One of the respondents said that none is able to sit with fire in the house. Illicit firearms are found in most African communities and are obtained purposely for use in committing crimes like cattle rustling.

Motivation by Diviners, Soothsayers and Fortune Tellers

The findings show that 84.8 per cent of the participants strongly agreed and 15.2 per cent agreed that motivation by diviners, soothsayers and fortune tellers is a cause of the persistence of cattle raiding in the community.

O'Donovan discussed that sorcery and witchcraft are found all over the world and in most African cultures. It is a situation where a person uses mystical powers against someone (O'Donovan, 1992, pp. 330–331). People who normally consult diviners get motivated whenever a magician informs them of their victory in war or raiding. Most African communities believe in African Traditional Religion, where spiritual powers are believed to exist.

Ojuka and Ochieng (1975) discussed that, “the influence of Christianity has done very to shake the belief on Oloiboni—most of them still consult the Oloiboni in times of social crisis because neither Christianity nor science can replace traditional precepts; therefore the areas of misfortune, it was believed, could be explained and controlled by the Oloiboni” (p. 31).

Initiation Ceremonies

The findings show that 82.6 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed and 17.4 per cent agreed that imparted knowledge in initiation contributed to the persistence of cattle raiding. There was no percentage for those who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Pokot community has a rite of passage like most other African communities. Men and women go through an initiation ceremony, though various groups have stood their ground to fight against female genital mutilation (Tuitoek, 2010, p. 35). Kibor championed writing about the effects brought about by negative elements in African culture (Kibor, 2003, p. 52).

Cultural values are passed from one generation to another on such occasions, and they have a tremendous impact on the initiates. Young men who pass out from initiation are ascribed as “morans” or “warriors”. Any instruction given is taken with a lot of seriousness because they are cultural beliefs which are not supposed to be

communicated anywhere else. Initiates are told that they are the warriors who are supposed to protect the community from aggression. Secondly, they are allowed to marry irrespective of their age, and proudly the young men take the advice to extreme levels.

Discussion of the Findings

The seven notable causes identified in the study were illiteracy, political causes, expansion of land, cultural value where one is considered a hero after raiding, marriage cultural norms, availability of sophisticated weapons, motivation by diviners/soothsayers/fortune tellers, and initiation ceremonies.

Illiteracy was identified as a contributing factor because young people who do not attend school are exposed to involvement in stealing for livelihood, while education is presented as an avenue through which young people can adopt different lifestyles. Wanjohi and Wanjohi (2005) emphasised that “education must be provided for all” (p. 158).

Political causes were also identified as contributing to the persistence of cattle raiding. The findings associate political influence with incitement to violence, while political leaders are described as having considerable influence among the Pokot community.

Expansion of land for grazing was associated with the need to move during dry seasons in search of grazing fields. The findings further show that boundary disputes contribute to tension between communities, particularly around Kapedo and other contested areas.

Cultural values were identified as another important factor. The findings show that raiding may be regarded as heroic when wealth is brought home from another community. The *sabana* ceremony also reinforces cultural recognition and status, with respondents indicating that young men are influenced by cultural instructions offered during the ceremony.

Marriage cultural norms were also associated with the persistence of cattle raiding because the payment of dowry in cattle and goats places a requirement on young men who have not accumulated sufficient wealth. The study reports that this requirement forces some young men to steal.

The availability of sophisticated weapons was strongly associated with the persistence of cattle raiding, with

91.3 per cent of respondents strongly agreeing and 8.7 per cent agreeing. The study also relates the availability of firearms to the militarisation of pastoral societies and the emergence of new forms of banditry and cattle rustling over which elders have no control.

Motivation by diviners, soothsayers and fortune tellers was also identified, with 84.8 per cent strongly agreeing and 15.2 per cent agreeing. The findings indicate that people who consult diviners may become motivated when they are informed of victory in war or raiding.

Finally, initiation ceremonies were identified as contributing to the persistence of cattle raiding. The findings indicate that cultural values are passed from one generation to another through initiation, while young men who pass through initiation are ascribed as “morans” or “warriors” and are instructed to protect the community from aggression.

Overall, the findings present the persistence of cattle raiding as being associated with educational, political, territorial, cultural, economic, material and traditional factors within the community.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The study sought to investigate the role of the church in curbing cattle raiding in the Pokot community. It is evident that cattle rustling is caused by illiteracy, cultural values/norms, and availability of sophisticated weapons, expansion of land for grazing, motivation by diviners/soothsayers/fortune tellers, politicking and trading of cattle, among other causes.

The findings on the persistence of cattle raiding show that the practice is associated with factors that are educational, political, cultural, territorial and material in nature. Illiteracy was identified as one of the major causes, while political influence was associated with incitement and violence. Expansion of land for grazing and boundary disputes were also identified as contributing factors.

The findings further show that cultural values and norms contribute to the persistence of the practice. The perception that a person becomes a hero after raiding, marriage cultural norms and the knowledge imparted during initiation ceremonies continue to influence young men. The availability of sophisticated weapons has also contributed to the persistence of cattle raiding, while motivation by diviners, soothsayers and fortune tellers was identified as another contributing factor.

The study therefore concludes that the persistence of cattle raiding cannot be associated with a single factor. The findings identify a combination of illiteracy, cultural values and norms, availability of sophisticated weapons, expansion of land for grazing, motivation by diviners/soothsayers/fortune tellers, politicking and other related factors.

Recommendations: The study makes the following recommendations:

- i. The government should eradicate the black market for cattle to reduce cases of cattle rustling, as this makes it easy for raiders to get money.
- ii. The warriors should be enlightened to stop the practice of cattle rustling, as it brings more harm than good.
- iii. The government should take appropriate action against cattle rustlers.

- iv. The government should provide enough security to the affected areas.
- v. The church should establish schools and other learning institutions to enlighten the young generation.
- vi. The church should evangelise the unreached communities and teach believers their role in ensuring peace.
- vii. The church should work together with the government in enlightening society.
- viii. The government should develop the community through irrigational farming and establish technical colleges, as it will enhance the availability of resources and provide skills to young people, thus reducing raiding to earn a living.
- ix. The community should be informed to embrace politicians who are concerned with nation-building and promote peace.

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