

Assessment of Banditry, Cattle Rustling and Insecurity Nexus in North West Kenya

By

Daniel Muange Musau
musauniel44@gmail.com
+254 701 142 177

Kenyatta University

Dr Xavier Francis Ichani (PhD) & Dr Francis Mulu (PhD)

Abstract

Banditry and cattle rustling in North West Kenya pose a serious threat to security in the country. The negative impact of violent banditry and cattle rustling in North West Kenya is heavily felt in terms of social disorder and economic disruption especially loss of human life and property destruction. Vicious cycles of insecurity in the region coupled with the prolonged deployment of security forces are an area of concern. Given the strong reluctance by scholars to publish works of banditry, this article will add to the existing literature. The paper posits that banditry and cattle rustling has evolved their methods and tactics to lethal militants reigning terror to the citizen and security personnel. The drivers of the modern banditry and cattle rustling in the region are unique together with the attendant causes since they continued fueling incessant insecurity with dire consequences. The study was anchored with a revisionist theory which is germane to the study due to its perspective on national security adopting a modern approach that is more human-centric than the traditional state-centric approach. With reference to banditry in North West Kenya, this article adopted a descriptive method to examine the connection between banditry and threat to security as well as describe the historical background of banditry, drivers of banditry, the threat posed by banditry to security, key raging debates concerning banditry and consequences of banditry. The paper suggests that a number of factors, including the lack of government control, high unemployment rates, poverty, a lack of social purpose (in the form of archaic cultural practices), political influence, illiteracy, competition for scarce resources, and the proliferation of small arms, are fueling the rise of banditry in Kenya's northwestern region. In the concluding reflections, the study strived to proffer academic recommendations and appropriate strategies for the governments, security agencies, and multi agencies to reduce the banditry problem in North West Kenya. From the general public, 120 respondents were chosen as the sample size. The study, which relied on secondary data, found that contemporary banditry constituted a serious threat to national security. The recommendations informed the conclusion of the study.

Keywords: Kenya, Banditry, Cattle Rustling, Pastoral Economy, Insecurity, Northern Kenya.

Assessment of Banditry, Cattle Rustling and Insecurity Nexus in North West Kenya

By

Daniel Muange Musau, Dr Xavier Francis Ichani (PhD) & Dr Francis Mulu (PhD)

Introduction

Banditry is evolving into one of the worst internal insurgencies harming national security, particularly in regions with a governance vacuum (Okoli, 2014). In Kenya's remote regions, banditry is rampant, according to Okoli. Banditry refers to the occurrence or predominance of violent crime or armed robbery. It entails using force or making threats to use force to intimidate someone with the intention to rob, rape, or kill them. A crime against people is banditry. It has been a frequent type of crime and a source of violence in modern countries.

A case of banditry in North West Kenya has been in existence for a long. North West Kenya is an area comprising of Baringo, Marakwet, Samburu, Laikipia, Turkana, and West Pokot areas of Elgeiyo Marakwet County which has been experiencing sporadic thefts of cattle and murders of citizens since the pre-independence period. The expansive landmass comprising 13% of the total land mass in Kenya has posed a serious challenge to security operations conducted in the areas by overstressing their deployment. The magnitude and the degree of the heinous act have catapulted banditry to unprecedented levels of terrorism.

Despite the government having improvised several methods and strategies to deal with the conflict, the formulas have been unsuccessful. Diverse causes contribute to the problem. Both historical and contemporary issues are twin causes of banditry. In certain circumstances, such as the requirement to amass animals for a dowry, cultural factors play a role, while in others, criminal conduct plays a part. Other factors include competition for scarce natural resources, political instability, and the profitable meat business. Security concerns close to each other have been on the rise due to the prevalence of modern banditry in North West Kenya.

Assumption

In the region of North West Kenya, banditry and cattle smuggling pose a grave security risk.

Objective

Examine cattle rustling and banditry as a significant hazard to security in the North West Kenya region, and propose strategies to mitigate their impact.

Statement of Problem

Banditry and cattle rustling practices in North West Kenya have caused great havoc in the area with a negative impact on social security in terms of loss of human lives, destruction of property, stealing of livestock, and displacement of populations. There are several drivers for the banditry and cattle rustling in the region ranging from ungoverned spaces, the high unemployment rate and accompanying destitution, social purpose (cultural practices), political influence, illiteracy, competition over scarce resources, and small arms proliferation, among others, which accelerate banditry in the northwest region of Kenya.

Scholars and locals disagree on the seriousness of the threat that cattle rustling and banditry pose to a nation's security. The persistent banditry degenerates into terrorism which results in

dire consequences to civilians and property. Evidence from earlier studies indicates that banditry causes civil disturbance to the public since they are driven by the criminal mind. Further bandit enclaves are a source of suffering for locals since they provide shelter to fleeing bandits and in return civilians are killed. Emerging trends of banditry have shunned traditional cultural factors which motivated the act and rather adopted economic perspectives and political dimensions.

The application of straight-jacketed state-centric approaches to minimize the effects of banditry and cattle rustling in the North West region has been the norm. The approaches have glaringly lacked the human-centric aspect which is critical to addressing various issues faced by the region. A human-centric approach sought to acknowledge and address basic threats to human safety paradigms thus suitable at North West region. Applications of both human and state security were equally important. State-centric approaches do not capture the realities of security in the northwest region where threats are primarily internal and times no militarized issues.

The escalation and persistence of banditry in North West Kenya affect the domestic security of the country and to some extent regional security. Security approaches and strategies have been employed with little success over time. In order to address the negative impact of banditry and cattle rustling, this article aims to proffer appropriate strategies to the national government which can be utilized by the security forces and multi-agency agencies.

Review of Related Literature

An Overview of Banditry

According to Grunewald (2004), banditry in Roman Empire times was considered a modest lifestyle for those who lived on the edges of society. In historical Roman banditry was only referred to when they caused civil disturbance to the public but remained underneath in the society. Their actions seemed unworthy to record. However other scholars disagreed with this proposition since banditry activities could not be ignored in any society considering their disruptive nature. In a society where social constructs such as patron-client systems were no longer able to offer a basic level of cohesion, banditry filled the vacuum. This is evident in North West Kenya whereby the bandits roam at will committing atrocities due to a lack of government presence in the bandit enclaves.

The bandit episodes were viewed as dramatic to end a plot and create tension as a diversionary maneuver. Bandits were classified as either honorable or bloodthirsty banditry depending on their motives. An honorable bandit was driven into the act by the need while a bloodthirsty bandit was driven by a criminal mind. The Roman conceptions of the bandit are not far removed from the modern bandit. Thusly bandits were seen as enemies of the Romans' good order conceived by the state.

Bandits are a subset of robbers since they are perceived as simple criminals by the general public. The state refers to them as outlaws, but they stay within the peasant community's moral order. Peasants regard them as heroes, champions, and avengers who right the oppressor's wrongs. They, on the other hand, rarely go beyond dangerously reinstating conventional order with a twisted fist. The old bandit setup was devoid of organizational structure and modern forms of mobilization. The phenomenon was primarily a product of the past, although a very recent history (Blok, 1972).

Dabov (2007) observed that the myth of banditry emerges when the state portrays widespread illicit activity as criminal and its participants as bandits. It has been challenging

Citation: Musau, D. M, Ichani, F. X & Mulu, F. (2023). Assessment of Banditry, Cattle Rustling and Insecurity Nexus in North West Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(4), 132 – 148.

to pin down the existence and character of banditry. To steal, smuggle, poach, be homeless, or steal cattle is not to act as a bandit. Without one of these, no thief could operate. Since there is no agreed-upon definition of banditry, anything can be interpreted in that way. All of the acts can be summed up in one word: panic. The lack of banditry from the penal code is likely due to the difficulty of defining the crime definitively.

According to Sharamo (2014), many people regard banditry as a battle over a few resources that is exacerbated by elite conspiracy, the primordial need for gain, and the widespread state of poverty. Therefore, the lack of effective dispute resolution processes, as well as poor governance, political clients, the progressive removal of grazing lands and routes, urbanization, climatic change, and increased population density, all contribute to an increase in banditry. Banditry in North West Kenya has been used by the oppressed as a means of self-expression.

Historical Background

According to Slatta, (1987), there is a strong economic motive behind banditry in Mexico from the late colonial era through the 1910 revolution however there are other contrasting views of bandit activity as a response to economic crises. The economic factor has a strong link with the security of the region. The two factors are dependent on each other and are inseparable for any country to realize meaningful development.

In the late nineteenth century, a banditry epidemic spread across the Egyptian countryside. Sixty or seventy-member gangs raided large estates, plundered traveling merchants, and organized local protection rackets, according to daily news accounts in contemporary newspapers. Their existence was a threat to public security. Conversely, modern banditry has reduced gangs' size into very small groups to reduce their signature and avoid detection due to sophisticated equipment utilized by the state.

According to Dabove (2007), the rural rebel was labeled a bandit by the state due to their erratic shift of behavior and habits, an evil hidden driving force against the dwellers. Among the well-known characters from Tupac Amaru, Emiliano Zapata, and Che Guevara in Latin America are bandits and rural rebels. The protean and mutating character of bandits remains one reason for their political survival and cultural relevance. Banditry invokes the thought to converge both elite culture and subaltern culture all in one. This way bandits in North West Kenya have been able to traverse between political and local interests and seemingly served them well.

As Juan Bablo (2007), accounts the elite threat and security of the state does not come from the competing elite but from the masses below where banditry thrives. The citizen affords the bandits a thriving environment where they get food, information including moral support to further their actions. Therefore historically, the interaction between a hegemonic influence of identification and widespread illegalities was thought to be the source of banditry:

...when they are rounded up, they are regarded as outlaws and there is no moment for clemency. For them, they know it is too hard to survive in the hands of the state security.

Banditry was supposed to originate from the interaction between a hegemonic effect of identity and pervasive illegalities. This affirms the reason why the bandits choose the most

Citation: Musau, D. M, Ichani, F. X & Mulu, F. (2023). Assessment of Banditry, Cattle Rustling and Insecurity Nexus in North West Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(4), 132 – 148.

difficult terrain of all to avoid being uprooted. In the case of North West Kenya, there are common hideouts such as Sukuta Valley, Malaso, and Tandare Valley among others where the bandits hide after committing their act. They are not acting in a bandit-like manner; rather, they are only fleeing from their adversaries while continuing to subsist off the land. Instead, it is a status before the law, similar to the outlaw in the Anglo-Saxon past, that is rooted in a political fight (Prasel, 1993).

The bandits' excesses denaturalize the hegemonic identity and its representational processes because they expose the rifts that separate it. The bandit is a witness to oppression, resistance, and the anxiety that such resistance causes within a state in the form of an imagined identity (Dabove, 2007). Despite many operations conducted against the bandits by the state machinery, the measure of success has been low. Bandits in North Rift have succeeded in planning and attacking the security forces resulting in loss of lives and injuries. In 1875, Corsica Island which was partly mountain and hilly was dominated by banditry who constantly conflicted with the agriculture enthusiasts and to an extent with the authority. When the grazing field could not produce or sustain grazing the herders robbed and pillaged the food stores for their cattle. This became a constant thing between authority and the herders (Wilson, 2003).

Mexico had experienced an endemic of banditry since its independence wars. It was not until 1875 during civil wars that the brigands started commanding control of areas to an extent of determining the victor of the war. Victors had to meet their share of a bargain with brigands (Vanderwood, 1992). As a result, the order and disorder of the yesteryears developed with bandits as the arbiter. Nothing cultivates banditry more than ineffectual governance. During that period bandits were for sale but at their price.

Pastoral villages in northwestern Kenya have a long history of banditry and livestock rustling conflicts, as reported by Schilling, Opiyo, and Scheffran (2012). Here, conflict refers to any physically or emotionally taxing contact between two parties due to their divergent worldviews. Seeing as cattle is the primary focus of pastoralism, most disputes center on the distribution of pasture, water, and land. These materials articulate the connection between raiding, the violent theft of animals, and the escalation of conflict. Raids, on the one hand, build mistrust amongst neighborhoods, an essential ingredient for any violent confrontation. However, communities express their animosity toward other communities by raiding. The best cattle could be stolen in relatively small-scale raids in the past, and animals lost to droughts or diseases might be replaced in this way.

Modern Banditry and Cattle Rustling

Bandits in the contemporary period of globalization, according to Usman and Singh (2021), are more than just rural gangs and thieves. Banditry is increasingly a sophisticated enterprise capable of challenging states' ineffective authority. Banditry has recently evolved into a network, exerting significant pressures in distant places and spreading its tentacles into metropolitan settings; this development has been accompanied by an increase in bloodshed. The case of North West Kenya is the same whereby banditry has turned out to be a sophisticated enterprise involving who is who in the region aided by the masses. The network continues to widen as more markets are supplied with products from the region.

According to the findings of Shehu et al. (2017), the advent of modernity has brought with it a more lethal type of cattle rustling and banditry, which has generated concerns due to the sophistication of the practice. The employment of sophisticated and lethal weaponry,

along with meticulous planning and execution, characterizes raids as having a military-grade level of accuracy. This is evident in the manner in which the Pokot raiders attack simultaneously and evade the security forces' dragnet. The raiders have been able to raid and drive away herds of cattle without security detection. According to locals, at least the security agencies have only been able to follow and recover the stolen cattle.

Cattle rustling in North West Kenya has evolved from a quasi-cultural practice with crucial livelihood-enhancing effects to a nasty criminal activity, far beyond the low-intensity conflict that historically characterized the interaction between farmers and grazers. New criminal gangs armed with sophisticated weapons have been alleged to be taking away cattle in Commando-style operations that have resulted in herders being killed. The many types of violence have resulted in deaths, displacements, and disruptions to both individual livelihoods and the broader economies of the most impacted communities. According to Osamba (2000), in North West Kenya, bandits have become more militarized and destructive in their operations, and they have stopped using crude weapons. Instead, modern cattle rustlers and bandits are known to use small arms and light weapons, particularly the Alexander Klashivok AK-47), to enhance their lightning attacks and hit and disperse faster. This is a key source of concern for public security in modern Kenya.

There is a lot of evidence suggesting that availability of modern automatic firearms has exacerbated the problem of armed violence in pastoral communities (Mirzeler and Young, 2000; Mkutu, 2006). Additionally, a conflict between pastoral communities has been exacerbated by commercialized livestock raiding, in which affluent businesspeople, politicians, traders, and local people pursue economic aims at the expense of pastoralists and their way of life (Kaimba *et al.* 2011; Eaton, 2010; Mkutu, 2010). A blurred definition of banditry has resulted in weak policing and difficulty in the application of justice administration in North West Kenya.

The emerging trends of modern banditry have shunned traditional cultural factors which motivated the act and rather adopted economic perspective and borderless activities. The currency of the banditry has resulted in internationalization especially where conflict extends to the states. The case of North West Kenya is proximal to Uganda and South Sudan. Modern pastoral conflicts are an expression of the overall violence in the country's morphing politics and profound political differences at the clan and ethnic levels (Sharamo, 2014). Young people's outlook on the world and their actions have been profoundly influenced by the power and economic shifts that have occurred in these communities as a result of modernization (Sharamo, 2014).

Deaths were uncommon, and when they did happen, victims or their families were compensated with livestock. For more than 9,000 years, pastoralist tribes have relied on raiding and bloodshed to replace herds, expand grazing territories, secure water and pasture supplies, and elevate their social standing. However, in recent years, the cultural practice has become more pervasive, sophisticated, violent, and destructive among pastoral communities in northern Kenya as a result of the proliferation of modern small arms, the commercialization of livestock raiding, a dispute over land tenure rights, banditry, and predation.

Threats Posed by Banditry and Cattle Rustling

Unprecedented Human Security

According to Schilling, Opiyo, & Scheffran (2012), conflicts and livestock raiding affect the well-being of pastoral communities in various direct and indirect ways. Loss of life and injuries sustained as a direct result of raiding is the aspect of human well-being that are most directly impacted by the practice. The high number of fatalities in comparison to the number of injuries suggests that the accessibility of small guns has contributed to the increase in the lethality of raids. Because practically all raiders are young males, the attacks not only have a bad impact on the community in the short term, but they also have a detrimental influence on the future prosperity of the community. Beyond the physical impacts of the conflicts on humans, there have been recorded negative psychological implications, such as traumas. This is in addition to the physical costs of the conflicts on humans.

Resulting in Permanent War

Escalating banditry disputes may result in even more bloodshed unless urgent actions and the task of halting the violence are moved up the national priority ladder (Mohammed & Baba, 2018). Failure to respond decisively and effectively will allow North West Kenya to slide further into deadly conflict. The banditry clashes in North Western Kenya have exacerbated the security situation. Kenya's security situation has deteriorated dramatically, with the country experiencing unprecedented levels of instability, requiring the government to allocate a significant portion of the national budget to security.

The huge allocation of the budget to security activities diverts other key projects which are significant for the growth of the country's GDP (Mohammed & Baba, 2018). Bandits fighting each other and stealing cattle have made the country's security problems worse. In the North West, for example, different towns are facing a wide range of security problems, such as disagreements between herders and farmers over land. The escalation of security threats may result in the internationalization of the act.

Drivers of the Banditry in North West Kenya

Ungoverned Spaces

Onwuzuruigbo (2021) investigated the connection between ungoverned spaces and increased banditry. ungoverned spaces allude that in North West Kenya harbors criminal elements exist due to the lack of full integration of these spaces administratively through the provision of security and rural infrastructure. In North West Kenya there are ungoverned spaces coupled with difficult terrain where the bandits hide after committing their heinous acts against locals and civilians. The presence of large swathes of ungoverned space that are generally out of reach of Kenyan security operatives escalates the rustling business.

The valleys dotting the difficult terrain often serve as perfect locations for criminals to hide out from security forces. These zones are suitable for banditry and are often referred to as enclaves of banditry. The epicenter of the banditry activities within the enclave keeps on shifting thus keeping the security forces off balance and in disarray. The upswing in cattle rustling may thus be attributed to poor governance in the ungoverned spaces, which effectively keeps the government and its agents away from forests. Effective governance is one path toward addressing cattle rustling in North Western Kenya.

Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

African countries' borders are easy to cross and aren't guarded, so both legal and illegal goods and services can move through any country in the area. This is also due to the agreements between regional blocs in Africa that allow people, goods, and services to move freely, as well as the large areas that are not controlled. This comparison also applies to North West Kenya, which shares borders with parts of South Sudan and Ethiopia. This has made it harder for member countries, like Kenya, to keep their people safe.

The Small Arms Survey, which was done in 2012 by Karen, found that the number of weapons in this part of Kenya has grown. Many illegal guns come in from South Sudan. Also, in the past, the state would arm the pastoralist villages in northern Kenya and leave them to take care of their security. This was called a "home guard" system. Consequently, this has resulted in many small arms in many hands, and without close checks the arms changed ownership to illegal owners. Uncontrolled ownership of the arms is a challenge. This has significantly contributed to fuel insecurity in the northern Kenya region. Also, deadly warfare has resulted in the communities competing to accumulate more weapons than others. The increased availability of small arms in the region as a result of previous hostilities is making everyday conflicts increasingly lethal (Leff, 2009).

Armed bandits and the proliferation of weaponry throughout the state are direct results of the conflict that was fostered by neighboring countries. As a result, there was no longer any doubt that criminality was at play, as evidenced by high-profile attacks and the wanton destruction of property. Muhammad and Baba (2018).

Difficult Terrain at Sukuta Valley

The Sugutu Valley is hard on the living, and even tougher on the dead, claims Karen (2012).

According to Massaro and Mullaney (2011), places can be seen as "more secure" or "dangerous," and frequently the subjectivity of places reflects the demographics of the people who inhabit them. As a result, it is possible to discover excellent and safe neighborhoods in cities filled with people who are considered deserving of protection, allowing institutionalized processes to uphold such standards. On the other hand, there are undesirable and risky neighborhoods that are populated by created subjectivities, each of which receives less protection from the state. The difficult terrain at Sukuta Valley in the north rift region has contributed hugely to denying security forces the opportunity to neutralize the bandits. The unpenetrable intertwined thicket and rugged terrain are no go to both dismounted and mounted patrols in pursuit of the bandits. Statistics have indicated that many security officers were either injured or killed by the bandits while pursuing them. For instance, in Nov 2012 over 40 Kenya Police officers and reservists were killed in the Suguta Valley near Baragoi while on a mission to recover stolen cattle. According to Karen 2012, the valley was referred to by other names as the valley of death to symbolize how easy it is to die while in that terrain.

Lack of Infrastructure

Banditry may very well be a political economy issue caused by unequal access to resources and a deliberate plan to exclude others from social formations. The lack of roads has isolated the North Kenya region from other forms of civilization, resulting in insecurity. The absence of infrastructure has prevented the region's development. According to the 2018 KNHCR Report, the causes of conflict in the region include a pervasive lack of infrastructure in most

regions of the North Rift, a negligible presence of government security apparatus, and deteriorating roads. Despite efforts to develop the region, it remains underdeveloped. Certain regions are dotted with telecommunications towers. In contrast, the improved coverage of mobile phone networks, particularly in Pokot, considerably increases the likelihood that the targeted community and administrative authorities will learn of the planned raid and prepare for it (Schilling, Opiyo, & Scheffran, 2012).

Economic Reasons

Sharamo (2014), presents the argument that political economists have made that violence, civil wars, and conflicts are not always useless enterprises, but that they could be functional and beneficial enterprises. One of the primary motivating factors behind the banditry and livestock rustling in North Western Kenya has been identified as commercial interests. According to Chilling, Opiyo, and Scheffran (2012), commercialization makes smaller raids more appealing. When compared to larger raids, smaller raids are preferable since they need a shorter organizing period and, as a result, draw less notice. This is in contrast to larger raids, which attract more attention. In this location, the possibility of being arrested is lower.

The emergence of commercialization provides an additional incentive for raiders to participate in smaller-scale raids, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will do so. According to the definition offered by Kratli and Swift (2003), commercialization is "an aspect of the wider integration of pastoralists within a market economy." According to Mkutu (2010), this type of raiding is carried out with the specific goal of selling animals for immediate profit rather than rebuilding their herds. Improved access to markets, an increase in the demand for meat as a result of high population growth in urban areas, and improved road infrastructure that reaches pastoral regions all contribute to the facilitation of commercialized raiding (Eaton 2010).

According to Eaton (2010), the only group that stands to gain exclusively from the raiding is the group of merchants and businesspeople who have access to low-cost livestock, which they are then able to sell in urban areas such as Lodwar, Nairobi, or Moroto in Uganda for a higher price (see also Eaton 2010). Traders are typically not considered to be members of the community, and as a result, they are immune to the negative repercussions of raiding and fighting.

According to Sharamo's argument (2009), the advent of a market economy and the rising polarization of rich and poor that resulted in labor migration have both contributed to the erosion of the authority of the elders. The pastoral youths have found new avenues to influence and wealth creation as a result of this economic transformation. These new avenues include the emergence of armed militias of young men and the new revenue opportunities accessible through banditry. Others, such as illiterate Morans, have discovered new ways to make a living and new adventures working as security guards or as casual laborers in different places around Kenya. As the trappings of the modern economy become more familiar to these warriors, their affinity for the cultural practices of the past and their regard for the authority that traditional elders have over them drastically decrease. Instead, these groups of enterprising young people engage in business, some of which may have illegal overtones. This generational transition, driven by economic factors, has a severe impact on inter-communal relations and continues to shape the dynamics of conflict and violence in northern Kenya.

Social Purpose (Cultural Practices)

Various pastoral communities have historically used raiding as a cultural practice for restocking livestock, particularly after drought or disease outbreaks (Opiyo, & Scheffran, 2012). However, livestock raiding has become more frequent, violent, and detrimental in recent years. For instance, starvation and drought affecting the availability and accessibility of resources are significant raiding motives among the Turkana, whereas increasing wealth and dowry payments are the most significant raiding motives among the Pokot. In addition, the maintenance and extent of their herds determine their ability to sustain a living.

According to Schilling, Opiyo, and Scheffran (2012), livestock ownership plays multiple social, economic, and religious roles in pastoral livelihoods, such as providing a regular source of food for household members in the form of milk, meat, and blood, and cash income to pay for cereals, education, health care, and other services. In pastoral communities, livestock is essential for dowry, compensation of injured parties during invasions, as a symbol of prosperity and prestige, and as a source of wealth and protection against drought, disease, and other disasters. In addition to functioning as a means of food production, storage, transport, and wealth transmission, livestock is therefore a fundamental form of pastoral capital.

In Pokot, payment of dowry and consolidation of wealth were the strongest motivations, while 25% of Pokot raiders cited territorial expansion as their primary motivation (Opiyo, 2012). This entailed the theft of cattle of the highest breed or the replacement of animals lost due to disease outbreaks and scarcity (Rutto, 202).

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is a universal syndrome of attitudes and behaviors, typically including in-group favoritism (Hammond, 2006). In Baragoi, negative socialization among the Pokot, Samburu, and Turkana has resulted in negative ethnicity, hostility, and animosity over the years. There were both acute and long-term effects on these communities. Each community had already established its social interaction boundaries. Despite the fact that some of the communities shared administrative services, the division is physically divided into two zones: the Samburu and Turkana zones. These zones led to the establishment of an administration based on ethnicity that promoted ethnocentrism. Additional negative socialization had manifested itself in the form of recurring ethnic and violent conflicts. It also manifested itself in the form of banditry and cattle theft behavior. As a consequence, insecurity disrupted socio-economic activities. People have relocated to calmer regions, never to return, due to ethnic conflicts.

Negative ethnicity manifests itself when one ethnic group feels imagined to be superior to another because of religion, language, culture, and even looks. Assumed ethnic superiority leads to negative ethnicity. One local admitted that in the north rift, our long-practiced culture is superior to the others and when they steal cattle from other communities should not be reprimanded. Negative ethnicity is also about the other community feeling inferior (Wamwere, 2003). According to Leff (2009), intertribal conflict arises when pastoralists from one tribe enter the territory of another. Hostile relations among the neighbors are also another motivating factor.

Citation: Musau, D. M, Ichani, F. X & Mulu, F. (2023). Assessment of Banditry, Cattle Rustling and Insecurity Nexus in North West Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(4), 132 – 148.

Competition for Political Advantage

Kimokoti (2022) asserts that cattle rustling was seen as a cultural practice carried out by pastoral communities and was authorized and regulated by the elders. However, new dynamics, trends, and patterns have developed over time, leading to the commercialization and internationalization of the practice, which has had numerous negative repercussions. The political aspect has not been left out in pursuit of power using proceeds from the banditry economy to gain political advantage and relevance.

Traditionally the elderlies and local chiefs sanctioned the banditry and cattle rustling such that whenever the situation was peaceful, they prevented any attack on another community (Sharamo, 2014). However, when a hostile community raided another community, the elders encouraged their youths to retaliate. In modern banditry and cattle rustling, a political hand cannot be gainsaid since in the pursuit of power local political leaders have resorted to the craft. Political leaders have been charged with inciting violence to advance their political goals. According to Sharamo, the main political agendas are driven by the struggle among ethnic groups for influence over and dominance of the County administration. Groups attempt to amass economic resources through such political control in order to create wealth and strengthen their positions in comparison to competitor communities. Politics, then, is a tool for achieving economic ends and a catalyst for and fan of community violence, particularly during general elections.

Although pastoral disputes have evolved through time, the recent violence in northern Kenya raises alarming new political variables that may be at play. Along with northern Kenya's growing significance in the nation's overall development strategy and relation to the politics surrounding its new decentralized government structure, the form of pastoral conflict appears to be evolving once again.

According to Sharamo (2014), the new devolved system channels significant public resources through county administrations, creating the conditions for increased competition amongst county-level elites. The promise of the much-awaited devolution agenda as well as national security and stability could be jeopardized if the distribution of public resources at the county level is not properly managed. The North Western Kenyan conflicts have been centered on the politicization of inter-communal relations. The breakdown of interdependent social contracts, elders' loss of control over youths, the persistence of the Moran (warrior) culture, and the politicization of peacemaking procedures have all contributed to the intractable nature of pastoral conflicts (Sharamo, 2014).

Illiteracy

Karimi (20030) found a downward trend in educational attainment in the North Rift. Since gaining independence in 1963, primary school enrollment has been low. Famine, drought, aridity, and semi-aridity all contributed to the region's food and water shortages. In addition, banditry contributed to widespread fear and poverty. As a result, enrollment in pastoral schools was either directly (due to closures) or indirectly (because of disruptions) impacted by these constraints. Negative socialization and a general sense of insecurity were also consequences of the persistent ethnic wars. As a result, children's education was disrupted and primary school enrollment was low due to the region's ongoing ethnic strife.

The literacy rate in North Rift was extremely low, as reported by Karanu, Murenga, and Osamba (2015). According to the Government of Kenya (2009), male literacy was 28.3% and female literacy was 15.3%. It also showed that women faced additional barriers in

enrolling in school and receiving equal educational chances. Many residents of the division were illiterate, the survey found, making them unable to effectively express their concerns or participate in decision-making. Lack of education limits the locals in attaining the attendant benefits of education which include awareness, improving living standards, and understanding the environment around us.

Competition for Resources- Pasture, Water Resources, and Boundaries

It has been claimed that one village in Makutani, Baringo East, has arbitrarily expanded its borders into neighboring territories. Loruk, Silale, and Kapedo in Baringo East have been identified as having significant geothermal potential, and oil in Lower Kerio Valley and diatomite in Chepkesin have also attracted attention. As a result, the various settlements arranged themselves to make the most of these assets. Inter-county confrontations between West Pokot and Turkana and West Pokot and the Marakwet region of Elgeiyo Marakwet were also documented by KNCHR, as were conflicts in the Amaya triangle of Loruk, Kapedo, and Turkwel Gorge. As a result of increasing crop cultivations and poor management of the existing grazing reserves, there has been a significant reduction in available livestock feed resources, and this has been blamed on climate change, which has exacerbated competition among pastoralist communities for shrinking pastures and water resources, especially in North Western Kenya.

Unemployment

The rustling of livestock has recently increased to previously unheard-of levels in Kenya. Due to a variety of circumstances, including the high unemployment rate in pastoral areas, it has evolved in nature, scale, and dimension (Kaimba, 2011). In the majority of African nations, youth unemployment is a significant issue, according to Abdi (2022). One of the continents with the greatest impacts on young unemployment is Africa. According to estimates, more than 21% of African youth are unemployed. Youth make up 64 percent of Kenya's unemployed, according to estimates. Numerous issues relating to securities have been made more difficult by the unemployment issue, both directly and indirectly. A case of North West region youths has engaged in banditry and cattle rustling due to unemployment.

Small Arms proliferation

Armed bandits and the proliferation of weaponry throughout the state are direct results of the conflict that was fostered by neighboring countries. High-profile attacks and the wanton destruction of property and life were the results (Mohammed & Baba, 2018). Due to the proliferation of small arms in the region as a result of recent conflicts, even minor conflicts have the potential to turn deadly (Leff, 2009).

Banditry, Cattle Rustling Debates, and Pastoral Economy

Important political and economic aspects of conflicts must be identified to provide a cogent roadmap for their efficient management and the decrease of violence. For some reason, the criminal operation of cattle rustling has not been sufficiently looked into and prosecuted. Law enforcement hasn't interfered with the vice's funders or leaders up until now. According to FAO, pastoralists produce roughly 80% of the beef consumed in Kenya, large-scale ranches produce another 2–5%, and highland farmers who use mixed farming produce the remaining 20%–25%. A University of Kentucky study published in 2021 that examined "Analysis of

Citation: Musau, D. M, Ichani, F. X & Mulu, F. (2023). Assessment of Banditry, Cattle Rustling and Insecurity Nexus in North West Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(4), 132 – 148.

Actors and Activities at Dagoreti Livestock Market in Nairobi, Kenya" refutes banditry claims. According to the study, Dagoretti is Nairobi's largest livestock market, and the animals traded there originate from five pastoral regions of the country: 43.02 percent in Southern Kenya, 21.68 percent in Northern Kenya, 17.22 percent in Eastern Kenya, 7.32 percent in Rift Valley and Western region, and 1.42 percent in Central Kenya. 7.1% of the bordering countries, including Uganda, are primarily the Banyankole breed, while 2.23 % are from Tanzania.

Banditry and Climate Change

According to Mohammed (2018), the primary causes of communal conflicts have been a growing human and animal population, which has increased environmental competition, as well as climatic changes. Due to dire climate change traditional grazing routes are expanding from grazing areas to forests and cultivation fields. This is evident in which the herders have been marauding white settlers in Laikipia County, especially LNC. A few decades ago such incidents were unheard of. During the dry season, harsh environmental conditions force pastoralists to migrate in quest of water and pastureland. With limited access to water and competing land rights, as Leff (2009) observes, there is a global water crisis.

Consequences of Banditry

The consequences of banditry, according to Abdullahi (2019), include accelerated radicalization of young people, a rise in the rate of youth unemployment, involvement in the sub-regions illicit gun and drug trade, the emergence of a network of criminal organizations, the slow decline of agricultural and livestock development with implications for income, trade, and commerce, a proliferation of small arms and light weapons, a tainting of traditional institutions, and more.

As prevented by Olapeju & Peter (2021), the level of banditry in the northwest of Kenya has resulted in a spree of mortalities, population displacements, cattle losses, disruption of socio-economic activities in general, as well as a climate of uncertainty, which has become a worry for the government and the populace.

Loss of human life and property, decline in cattle numbers, reduced access to water and pasture resources, and forced migration are all direct consequences of violent raiding (Schilling, Opiyo, & Scheffran, 2012). Further, indirectly, violent conflicts create a strong and omnipresent perception of insecurity which results in ineffective resource utilization, reduced mobility, food insecurity, and closure of markets and schools.

Social Disorder

Vulnerable Groups

According to Mohammed and Baba (2018), the communities have been taking the burden of the violence caused by banditry for a long time. Marauding rustlers and bandits have been responsible for the loss of innocent residents' lives as well as the property of security forces. The statistic shows that women, children, and the elderly are heavily bearing the cost of banditry violence.

Schools and Education Disruption

After the Kenyan government instituted free primary education in 2003, enrollment increased by 17.7 percentage points that year, as reported by Karanu, Murenga, and Osamba (2015).

The North Rift region (mostly populated by pastoralist populations) had low primary school net enrolment ratios (NERs). Free public schools were made available to residents of the North Rift region, but many families have chosen to keep their children at home rather than risk sending them to school.

The upheaval compounds the already substantial socioeconomic hurdles that primary school parents must already overcome. The survey also found that low primary school enrollment in the Baragoi division was largely caused by and attributed to ethnic and violent conflicts (93.62 percent). This is due to the fact that the frequency of these disputes was quite high (96.8%), resulting in a number of direct and indirect unfavorable consequences on enrollment. According to Karanu (2015), when banditry strikes, it wreaks havoc on educational institutions.

Insecurity

According to Mohammed and Baba (2018), violence stemming from communal tensions has become more commonplace in a number of the local communities located in North Western Kenya. One of the most worrisome aspects of national security in Kenya is represented by the violent clashes that have taken place between ranchers and farmers in several regions of West Kenya. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of cattle rustlers, and tensions between Kikuyu and Pokot cattle herders on the usage of land have contributed significantly to Kenya's diminished sense of national security.

The gruesome incidents of these new security threats that are routinely reported from different sections of the country have significantly increased the amount of upheaval in Kenya's socio-economic and political environment. Therefore, the persistent crises have posed a threat to the safety of the state, lowered the country's economic production, and made the food crisis in North Western Kenya even worse.

Economic Disruption

The local economy has been severely impacted as a result of fights between farmers and herdsmen and other infamous bandit actions (Mohammed & Baba, 2018). The agricultural production of arable crops and cattle, which are essential to rural communities' social well-being, was interrupted by this unsightly trend. North Kenya has a significant natural resource deposit; however, the local economy is not particularly impressive. Mohammed and Baba assert that banditry undermines and jeopardizes the viability of pastoral farming and grain production. These conflicts mostly harmed the previously marginalized populations, including women and children, and they reinforced cycles of extreme poverty, hunger, and the destruction of social status and food security.

In many places, the conflicts have exacerbated a cycle of poverty and interfered with children's schooling. For instance, in Laikipia County, insecurity has not only negatively impacted people's ability to earn a living and their economic activities, but has also caused farming, which is the main source of livelihood, to be abandoned and communities to be abandoned out of fear. This is quickly destroying the social fabric of the communities and destroying fundamental human values, with consequences that are too terrifying to consider.

The state's investment potential has been severely hampered by the banditry issue. It is no longer possible to transport goods and other agricultural products alongside animal products. Mohammed and Baba explain that this is because of the terror the bandits instilled in people through their criminal activity. In addition to significantly hindering the nation's

economic growth, these conflicts have negative effects on trade, crop yield, farmer displacement, loss of life and property, loss of goods in storage, and destruction of both public and private structures. If nothing is done to stop this awful scenario, it is obvious that achieving food security and sustainable development will be a mirage. According to Bashir 2021, farmers are afraid to work on their farms and marketers avoid going to the market because of cattle rustling.

Methodology

With reference to banditry in North West Kenya, this article adopted a descriptive method to examine the connection between modern banditry and threat to security as well as describe the historical background of banditry, drivers of banditry, the threat posed by banditry to security, key raging debates concerning banditry and consequences of banditry. Banditry in Kenya's northwestern region is exacerbated by a number of factors, including a lack of government control, widespread poverty, a lack of opportunity, antiquated cultural norms, a lack of education, an arms race for limited resources, and an increase in political influence and power.

Conclusion

The study aimed to elucidate the nexus between modern banditry and insecurity in North West Kenya. From the foregoing, it is evident that modern cattle rustling and banditry is a serious national security threats in the North West region. Left unabated banditry and cattle rustling will continue causing losses to human lives and destruction to property. The drivers of banditry and cattle rustling should be curtailed to reduce the escalation of conflict in the North West region.

The state has been using the state-centric approaches to minimize the effects of banditry and cattle rustling in the North West region more than the human-centric aspect which is critical to addressing various issues faced by the region. A combination of the human and state security approaches offers more advantages since state-centric approaches do not capture the realities of security in the Northwest region.

Recommendation

This article recommends a comprehensive approach to reducing the banditry menace in North West Kenya by robustly employing other lines of effort and invoking formula 20%; 80% where 20 % is security approaches and models whereas 80% is other lines of effort. This will bring all the stakeholders to one table and synchronize the activities.

Other lines of effort are appropriate to address endemic poverty issues in the area and come up with better strategies and alternatives, focusing on academic empowerment over some time. Methodologies to reduce the drivers and motivating factors of banditry and cattle rustling are recommended. Ongoing peace-building efforts should be sustained.

In addition, the preventive strategies were determined to be fruitless in the investigation. As a result, the research suggests that the state government should make rustling cattle a priority in terms of public safety and work in conjunction with residents to put an end to the problem.

Citation: Musau, D. M, Ichani, F. X & Mulu, F. (2023). Assessment of Banditry, Cattle Rustling and Insecurity Nexus in North West Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(4), 132 – 148.

References

- Abdi, N. D. (2022). *Relationship between youth unemployment and crime prevalence in Wajir County, Kenya* (Doctoral Dissertation, Africa Nazarene University, Kenya).
- Abdullahi, A. (2019). *Rural banditry, regional security and integration in West Africa*. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 2(3).
- Barkey, K. (1994). *Bandits and bureaucrats: The Ottoman route to state centralization*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Bashir, A. M. (2021). The implications of cattle rustling to human and food security in the rural communities of Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development*, 2(1), 18-18.
- Blok, A. (1972). The peasant and the brigand: social banditry reconsidered. *Comparative studies in Society and History*, 14(4), 494-503.
- Crummey, D. (1986). *Banditry, rebellion and social protest in Africa*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann Educational Books
- Dabove, J. P. (2007). *Nightmares of the lettered city: Banditry and literature in Latin America, 1816-1929*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Grunewald, T. (2004). *Bandits in the Roman Empire: Myth and reality*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Hammond, R. A., & Axelrod, R. (2006). The evolution of ethnocentrism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 50(6), 926-936.
- Kaimba, G. K., Njehia, B. K., & Guliye, A. Y. (2011). Effects of cattle rustling and household characteristics on migration decisions and herd size amongst pastoralists in Baringo District, Kenya. *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice*, 1(1), 1-16.
- Karanu, M., Murenga, H., & Osamba, J. (2015). Socio-cultural and economic factors affecting primary school enrolment in Baragoi Division of Samburu County, Kenya. *Asian Journal of Management Sciences & Education*, 4(2), 62-74.
- Karen, A. (2012). Samburu County killings: Kenya's 'valley of death'. BBC News
- Kimokoti, S. N. (2022). Cattle Rustling in Kenya: A review of the root causes, emerging trajectories and mitigation strategies. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)*, 8(4), 119-124.
- Leff, J. (2009). Pastoralists at war: Violence and security in the Kenya-Sudan-Uganda border region. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCIV)*, 3(2), 188-203.
- Macharia J. (2012). At least 32 Kenya police dead in cattle raid ambush. Reuters.
- Mohammed, A., & Baba, Y. T. (2018). *Herdsmen-farmers' conflicts and rising security threats in Nigeria*. *Studies in Politics and Society (Thematic Edition)*, 7(1), 1-20.
- Okoli, A. C., & Okpaleke, F. (2014). Banditry and crisis of public safety in Nigeria: Issues in national security strategies. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(4), 350-362.
- Olapeju, R. M., & Peter, A. O. (2021). The impact of banditry on Nigeria's security in the Fourth Republic: An evaluation of Nigeria's Northwest. *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development*, 2(1), 26-26.
- Onwuzuruigbo, I. (2021). Enclaves of banditry: Ungoverned Forest spaces and cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria. *African Studies Review*, 64(1), 168-191.
- Osamba, J. O. (2000). The sociology of insecurity: cattle rustling and banditry in North-Western Kenya. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 1(2), 11-37.

Citation: Musau, D. M, Ichani, F. X & Mulu, F. (2023). Assessment of Banditry, Cattle Rustling and Insecurity Nexus in North West Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(4), 132 – 148.

- RUTTO, J. K. (2022). *Perceived community livelihoods and management of banditry and cattle rustling menace in Baringo county, Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, Africa Nazarene University).
- Schilling, J., Opiyo, F. E., & Scheffran, J. (2012). Raiding pastoral livelihoods: motives and effects of violent conflict in north-western Kenya. *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice*, 2(1), 1-16.
- Sharamo, R. (2014). The politics of pastoral violence: a case study of Isiolo County, Northern Kenya. *Future Agricultures Consortium Working Paper*, 95.
- Slatta, R. W. (Ed.). (1987). *Bandidos: The Varieties of Latin American Banditry* (p. 1). New York: Greenwood Press.
- Vanderwood, P. J. (1992). *Disorder and progress: Bandits, police, and Mexican development*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wamwere, K. W. (2003). *Negative ethnicity: from bias to genocide*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Wilson, S. (2003). *Feuding, conflict and banditry in nineteenth-century Corsica*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.