

Effects of Cattle Raiding on Communities Surrounding the Pokot Community

Author

Fredrick Kipro Kiptoo 

Main author's email: kiptoof@kabarak.ac.ke

Kabarak University, Kenya.

Cite this article in APA

Kiptoo, F. K. (2026). Type Effects of cattle raiding on communities surrounding the Pokot community. *Journal of humanities and social sciences*, 5(1), 29-35. <https://doi.org/10.51317/jhss.v5i1.1129>



A publication of Eduton
Consortium Publishing (online)

Article history

Received: 2026-06-19

Accepted: 2026-07-21

Published: 2026-08-13

Scan this QR to read the paper online



Copyright: ©2026 by the author(s).
This article is an Open Access article
distributed under the terms and
conditions of the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-
ShareAlike 4.0 International License
(CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).



Abstract

The study sought to investigate the extent to which cattle raiding has affected communities surrounding the Pokot community, with a focus on the Africa Inland Church (AIC) Loiwa District Church Council in Baringo North Sub-County, Baringo County, an area bordering East Pokot. Cattle raiding has been practised both locally and internationally and has brought various effects to communities. The study used a descriptive survey design, with systematic sampling used to select 50 respondents from nine local churches in the Loiwa DCC, comprising pastors, teachers, church elders, church women and church youth; 46 questionnaires were completed and returned, a 92 per cent return rate. The findings established that cattle raiding resulted in death and loss of property, poverty, displacement of persons, educational effects, religious effects and social effects. The study found that bandits kill to own property and that retaliatory attacks result in loss of lives. People lose property due to the vice, leaving them poor, while people in affected areas flee for their lives, some moving with their property and never returning. Cattle raiding also affects education as teachers from other communities run for their lives and seek employment elsewhere, while schools are sometimes closed due to insecurity. The vice creates religious challenges and affects socialisation by creating enmity among communities. The study therefore concludes that cattle raiding brings challenges to people in Baringo North and neighbouring East Pokot, including insecurity, poverty due to stolen cattle, fear of attack while in ministry or school, disruption of learning and understaffing in schools.

Key terms: Cattle raiding, communities, displacement, education, poverty, social effects.

INTRODUCTION

Cattle raiding is a practice that has become a challenge in Baringo County and the country at large. Bandits from some communities have made innocent women, children and security officers their prey. Pokot land has become insecure due to the vice, thus making the church weak in fulfilling the Great Commission of the Lord (Matthew 28:18–20) due to fear of being killed. The vice has troubled local and national leaders. In Baringo County, for example, the practice has become disastrous. Baringo County is gradually losing millions of shillings in investment and aid from donors to ASAL areas, as insecurity caused by persistent cattle rustling and banditry rules the volatile borders of Baringo North, Tiaty and Baringo South Sub-Counties. Development projects and investments funded by both governments and development partners may be lost due to insecurity (Baringo County Government, n.d.).

The issue of cattle raiding has been gaining considerable international attention, particularly as linked to the loss of life, livestock and property. The vice has become a disaster that has made so many people poor. The media have reported a number of deaths as a result of cattle raiding. In Barakoi, 42 police officers were killed, while in another incident, 21 police officers lost their lives in Kapedo after being ambushed by bandits. Apart from the killings, people have also lost their properties; animals have been stolen, and houses torched down (Deep Cogitation, 2013).

Cattle raiding makes people poor, depressed, stressed and scared. It has resulted in an increased rate of school dropouts, both primary and secondary, in most parts of interior Pokot. Learning has been paralysed in most schools, with schools being closed or partially opened because parents live in fear of attacks. Children walk from as far as ten kilometres, crossing seasonal rivers to get to school, unsure of their security. Most schools in the county have recorded fluctuating numbers of enrolled pupils as people in the area keep fleeing from their villages (Kibui, 2014).

The effects of cattle raiding have also been felt through the movement of people from affected areas. People flee for their lives, while others leave with their properties and never return. The continued insecurity

therefore affects the stability of communities and the development of the affected areas.

The effects are also evident in the education sector. Stakeholders in the education sector have warned that more schools are likely to close down while others may become overpopulated. This is despite the reducing number of teachers in the regions, as some seek transfers and others resign, fearing for their lives due to insecurity. In Mukutani Sub-County within Baringo Central, the number of pupils reduced from 2,961 in 2010 to 2,341, while at least 543 pupils could not be accounted for between 2013 and 2014. In the last four years, candidates presented for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination had dropped by 30.7 per cent (Baringo County Government, n.d.).

The issue of cattle raiding has therefore affected communities in different ways, including loss of life, loss of livestock and property, poverty, displacement and disruption of education. The practice has also affected relationships among neighbouring communities. People in some communities no longer enjoy peace and live in fear of violence and danger from cattle raiders.

Cattle rustling has been practised both locally and internationally. Some communities in the country have experienced unrest due to the vice. The government has fought tirelessly to curb the vice but has never been able to. Schools have been closed, while people have lost their lives and property. Though measures have been taken by the government to end the menace, it has remained persistent in the Pokot community and other parts of the country (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

The study therefore sought to investigate the extent to which cattle raiding has affected other communities surrounding the Pokot community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effects of Cattle Raiding on Communities

Cattle raiding has various effects on communities. The vice results in loss of life and property, poverty, displacement of persons, educational effects, religious effects and social effects. The effects extend to different aspects of community life and affect the well-

being of people living in areas where cattle raiding is practised.

Death and Loss of Property

Bandits kill to own property. In the recent past, forty-two police officers were ambushed and killed in Barakoi, Samburu County, while twenty-one police officers were also killed in November in Kapedo, Baringo County, in a similar incident. Whenever a community is raided, a retaliatory attack is expected, which results in loss of life (The Standard Sunday, 2010).

The loss of property is another major effect of cattle raiding. People lose property due to the vice, thus leaving them poor. Among pastoralist communities, livestock is their main source of wealth. Stealing goats, sheep, camels or cows brings them to abject poverty. People who had acquired wealth are forced to recollect life once again (Mwangi, 2013, p. 55).

Poverty

Wealth is accumulated over a period of time, but it can be destroyed in a day by raiders. People lose their property due to this vice, thus leaving them poor. Among pastoralist communities, livestock is their main source of wealth, and the loss of livestock affects their livelihood. The destruction and theft of livestock therefore force people who had acquired wealth to recollect life once again (Mwangi, 2013, p. 55).

Displacement of Persons

Cattle raiding also results in the displacement of people from affected areas. Many people working in Pokot, in most cases, are transferred forcefully because of insecurity. People flee for their lives, while others leave with their properties and never return. The continued movement of people affects the stability of communities and the activities taking place in the affected areas.

Educational Effects

Cattle raiding affects education in different ways. Teachers from other communities run for their lives and seek employment elsewhere. Schools are sometimes closed due to insecurity, while the number of pupils in schools is affected by the continued movement of people from insecure areas.

In some areas, learning has been paralysed because parents live in fear of attacks. Children may have to walk long distances to get to school, crossing seasonal rivers while unsure of their security. Schools in the affected areas have also recorded fluctuating numbers of enrolled pupils as people continue fleeing from their villages (Kibui, 2014).

The education sector is further affected by the reducing number of teachers in the regions, as some seek transfers while others resign, fearing for their lives due to insecurity. Stakeholders in the education sector have warned that more schools are likely to close down while others may become overpopulated.

Religious Effects

Cattle raiding also affects religious activities. Fear caused by insecurity makes it difficult for the church to fulfil its mission in affected areas. People working in ministry may fear for their lives, while missionaries who live in affected areas may migrate to peaceful communities because they fear that they might be killed with their children.

The insecurity therefore affects the ability of religious workers to remain and carry out their activities in areas affected by cattle raiding.

Social Effects

Cattle raiding affects social relationships among communities. The practice creates enmity among communities and affects socialisation. Whenever a community is raided, retaliatory attacks may follow, resulting in loss of life and further hostility between communities.

The continued practice of cattle raiding therefore affects relationships between neighbouring communities. People in affected communities may no longer relate well through marriages and ceremonies because of the hostility created by cattle raiding.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, drawing respondents from the departmental programs of local churches and combining this with quantitative analysis of the data obtained from questionnaires, in order to ensure equitable and reliable information, as Kombo and Tromp (2006)

describe research design as the structural "glue" that holds the elements of a research project together (p. 70). Questionnaires were used, consistent with Mugenda and Mugenda's (1999) observation that they are a common means of obtaining important information about a population (p. 71), and were administered to pastors, teachers, church elders, church women and church youth. The questionnaires comprised open-ended items to be answered either with a tick or by filling in a statement.

The study's target population was situated within the Africa Inland Church (AIC) Loiwat District Church Council, whose wider congregation of believers was approximated at 750. The DCC was served by eight pastors in total, comprising three trained pastors and five untrained pastors (elders), and encompassed nine local churches and three schools — two boarding primary schools and one newly established day secondary school. Drawing on Serem et al.'s (2013) definition of target population as the population accessible to the researcher (p. 35), and Mugenda and Mugenda's (1999) description of a research population as a large, accessible collection of individuals (p. 10), the researcher accessed this population through its leadership and representative membership — pastors, church elders, teachers and representatives of the women's and youth groups — rather than the full congregation.

Throughout the study, ethical considerations were carefully observed. The researcher explained the purpose of the research to respondents in advance and assured them of confidentiality, masking participants' identities using pseudonyms such as "A" or "B." The DCC chairman was requested to inform church leaders ahead of data collection, and respondents were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to decline any question they did not wish to answer; in practice, however, all respondents answered every question in the questionnaire.

A systematic sampling procedure was used to give all members of the population an equal chance of selection, in line with Serem et al.'s (2013) account of the method (p. 36). Drawing on Mugenda and Mugenda's (1999) description of sampling as the process of selecting a smaller group to represent a

larger population (p. 10), the researcher drew respondents from the nine local churches making up the Loiwat District Church, sourcing information from 50 respondents in total. Every church contributed at least one participant, with larger churches contributing more heavily, ranging between three and seven respondents each. The District Church Council chairman assisted the researcher in accessing members of the churches, helping to identify individuals willing to volunteer information.

The research instrument itself consisted of questionnaires administered to pastors, church elders, church women, church youth and teachers, with items framed to directly address the study's research questions and objectives. To collect the data, the researcher first obtained an introductory letter from the Dean of Theology to facilitate the study, given the critical nature of the issue under investigation, and separately sought consent from the District Church Council Chairman to collect data within his area of jurisdiction, given the issue's national significance. Respondents were given two weeks to complete the questionnaires, and the researcher arranged mutually convenient times and locations to collect the completed instruments.

Once collected, the data were sorted, edited, entered, processed, classified, cleaned, organised, checked and interpreted for completeness and internal consistency in relation to the specific research questions, reflecting Mugenda and Mugenda's (1999) characterisation of data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a mass of collected information (p. 203). Findings were subsequently presented through a combination of essay narrative, bar charts, pie charts and tables.

To establish validity and reliability — understood, per Kombo and Tromp (2006), as measures of how well a test measures what it is intended to measure and how consistent its results are (p. 97) — respondents were given a week to read through and complete the questionnaire and were assured of confidentiality throughout. Due to constraints of time and distance, the researcher was able to follow up with only four respondents to verify the accuracy of the typed data, and those respondents affirmed the analysis and the ideas it captured. In total, 50 questionnaires were

distributed, of which 46 were returned, comprising pastors, teachers, elders, women and youth, for a response rate of 92 per cent.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Effects of Cattle Raiding

The study established that cattle raiding has various effects on communities. These effects include death and loss of property, poverty, displacement of persons, educational effects, religious effects and social effects.

Death and Loss of Property

Bandits kill to own property. In the recent past, forty-two Kenyan soldiers were ambushed and killed in Barakoi, Samburu County, while twenty-two other police officers were also killed in November in Kapedo, Baringo County, in a similar incident. Whenever a community is raided, a retaliatory attack is expected, which results in loss of life (The Standard Sunday, 2010).

The loss of property is another effect of cattle raiding. People lose property due to the vice, thus leaving them poor. Among pastoralist communities, livestock is their main source of wealth. Stealing goats, sheep, camels or cows brings them to abject poverty. People who had acquired wealth are forced to recollect life once again (Mwangi, 2013, p. 55).

Poverty

Wealth is accumulated over a period of time, but it can be destroyed in a day by raiders. People lose property due to this vice, thus leaving them poor. Among pastoralist communities, livestock is their main source of wealth, and stealing goats, sheep, camels, or cows brings them to abject poverty. People who had acquired wealth are forced to recollect life once again (Mwangi, 2013, p. 55).

The effect of cattle raiding on wealth is therefore significant because livestock constitutes the main source of wealth among pastoralist communities. The loss of livestock affects people who had acquired wealth over a period of time and forces them to begin life once again.

Displacement of Persons

Many people working in Pokot, in most cases, are transferred forcefully due to insecurity. People from the affected areas flee for their lives; some move with their properties and never return. In May 1997, 10 people were killed in Murkutwo, Marakwet, while in 2001 more than 40 people were killed, making residents flee to the highlands to live with their relatives in fear of attack, while others ran to caves (Pax, 2003, p. 25).

The insecurity has also resulted in the displacement of innocent and poor pastoralists, many of them children, women and the elderly. Ngoroko operations resulted in the displacement of more than 3,000 people in Bartabwa Division and Kipsaraman in Baringo North. From the Baragoi incident, thousands of Turkana were still trekking northwards away from Samburu County.

Educational Effects

Cattle raiding has a lot of effects on education. Teachers from other communities run for their lives and seek employment elsewhere. Many primary and secondary schools neighbouring East Pokot in the southern part are, many times, closed due to insecurity. The primary schools affected include Makutano, Moigutwo, Kiserian, Kalabata, Chepkesin, Bartabwa, Kiyang, Kagir, Kinyach, Tilingwo and Chementany. The secondary schools include Kiserian Secondary, Churo Secondary, Arapmoi Secondary and Bartaba Secondary (The Standard Sunday, 2014).

The closure of schools and movement of teachers affect the continuity of education in areas neighbouring East Pokot. Insecurity therefore affects both the availability of teachers and the continued operation of schools.

Religious Effects

One of the challenging effects of cattle raiding is that Christians might doubt the existence of a sovereign being. The suffering associated with the vice raises questions concerning the existence and sovereignty of God. It is described as confusing and contradictory to theistic beliefs and puts God in an awkward position unless defended.

The kind of theology embraced by the church also affects religion. Christianity must influence society and

bring change. In relation to cattle raiding, the church can enjoy expanding the kingdom of God if the vice is ended.

Social Effects

Stealing of property creates enmity, which affects socialisation. Young people are advised not to marry from such militant communities, while working with people from such communities is normally difficult. An example is given of a passenger service vehicle operating from Nakuru to Chemolingot, where Pokots and Turkana separate themselves inside the bus, with Turkana sitting behind and Pokots in front, and the two groups do not talk to each other.

Cattle raiding therefore affects relationships between communities. The hostility created by stealing property affects socialisation, marriage relationships, interaction and business. Without cattle rustling, these communities and others could have enjoyed their company, business and spreading of the gospel.

Discussion

The findings show that cattle raiding affects communities beyond the immediate loss of livestock. The effects extend to human life, property, livelihoods, settlement, education, religion and social relationships. Loss of life is followed by retaliatory attacks, while loss of livestock and other property leaves people poor. Insecurity also forces people to leave their homes and affects teachers and schools in the affected areas.

The effects also extend to religious and social life. Insecurity and the suffering associated with cattle raiding raise questions concerning religious beliefs, while the practice creates enmity that affects socialisation and relationships between communities.

Cattle raiding consequently affects the wider community by disrupting livelihoods, education, movement, religious activities and relationships among neighbouring communities. The effects are interconnected, with insecurity contributing to

displacement, disruption of education and deterioration of social relations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: Cattle rustling had several effects, which included closure of schools due to insecurity in the learning institutions, poverty in the affected areas, teachers seeking transfer to other safer areas and death, among other effects. Cattle rustling brings challenges to the people, and some of the major challenges identified include insecurity, poverty due to stolen cattle, fear of attack while in ministry or school, disruption of learning and understaffing in schools, among other challenges.

The effects of cattle raiding therefore extend beyond the loss of cattle. The practice affects education, livelihoods, security, religious activities and the lives of people in the affected areas.

Recommendations: Based on the findings, the study makes several recommendations. The government should eradicate the black market for cattle, since its existence makes it easy for raiders to profit from stolen livestock, and should take appropriate action against cattle rustlers, with security forces dealing firmly with those found engaging in the practice. Alongside this enforcement, warriors should be enlightened on the harms of cattle rustling, so that they are dissuaded from a practice that brings more harm than good, while communities should be sensitised on alternative methods of dowry payment other than cattle and goats, as this would help reduce the incentive for rustling.

The government should also support the long-term development of affected communities through irrigational farming and the establishment of technical colleges, which would improve access to resources and equip young people with skills, reducing their reliance on raiding as a means of livelihood. Finally, communities should be encouraged to embrace political leaders who prioritise nation-building and the promotion of peace.

REFERENCES

- Kombo, D. K., & Tromp, L. A. D. (2006). *Proposal and thesis writing: An introduction*. Don Bosco Printing Press.
- Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (1999). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Acts Press.

- Mwangi, J. C. W. (2013). *Influence of cattle rustling on pupils' access to primary education in Bartabwa Division in Baringo North District of Kenya* (Master's thesis, University of Nairobi).
- Pax Christi. (2003). *Civil society acting on security: Controlling the demand for small arms; The search for strategies in the Horn of Africa and the Balkans: Conference report, The Hague, 8–10 December 2003*.
- Serem, D. K., Boit, J. M., & Wanyama, M. N. (2013). *Understanding research: A simplified form*. Utafiti Foundation.
- The Standard Sunday. (2010, January 10). *The Standard*.
- The Standard Sunday. (2014, May 25). *The Standard*.