

bal warfare with their northern neighbours between the late 1960's and 1984. It is the dynamic behind this conflict I want to elucidate here.

1 The Pokot-Turkana conflict

In precolonial and early colonial times Turkana and Pokot raided each other, but periods of open warfare changed with times of peace. Between 1910 and 1918 the Turkana attained superiority due to guns they had obtained from Ethiopia (Bollig 1987). British disarming patrols and later on an administration looking especially into inter-ethnic conflict resolution brought an end to raiding. After about fifty years of peace resulting in numerous inter-ethnic marriages and stock friendships cutting across ethnic borders warfare resumed again. The state of war between the two pastoral nomadic groups is characterized by mutual raiding. Raiding parties consist of several hundred men setting out after some weeks of careful preparation. They wage far into enemy territory and try to capture as much livestock as possible. Though killing enemies is not a primary aim, frequently raids result in a number of deaths. Additionally small parties of thieves consisting of two to ten men venture into enemy territory to attack one or two households during nighttime and then make away with the loot as quickly as possible. Before looking at the causes for large scale raiding I will shortly depict the chronology of the conflict and show the cultural significance of raiding.

A chronology of the conflict

Several times well armed Turkana raided Pokot homesteads near the boundary to Turkana District in the late 60's. Each time they killed several Pokot and made away with considerable herds. Pokot reported the raids to the District Commissioner in Kabarnet. But while British administrative police had been on the scene only a day or two after the first incident, Kenyan police would act only a few weeks later. Pokot living in areas bordering Turkana District fled south. Only after the Pokot MP brought the matter to parliament action was taken. An army unit was installed at Kapedo on the border between Pokot and Turkana. This brought peace for a short time as warriors from both sides feared army reprisals.

In 1974 Turkana resumed raiding. Their raids reached deep (30 to 50 km) into Pokot territory. All raids now resulted in many deaths and the loss of considerable numbers of livestock. For five years raid followed raid and large areas were evacuated by the Pokot (up to one third of their territory). Many raiders had acquired automatic guns and did not shy away from administrative police. Nginyang, the main center of the area, was attacked thrice in 1977 and about 40 people were killed. At the same time Turkana tribal warriors and a very well organized group of Turkana bandits (Ngoroko) raided Pokot homesteads. From at least 1976 onwards Pokot had attained