

## Conflict and Social Change: The East Pokot Pastoralists Adjustment to Conflict

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### Abstract

*Conflict among herders in East Africa is a common occurrence. It affects millions of people in many ways by extinguishing their livelihoods and forcing many others to change. This paper is focused on the East Pokot pastoralists' adjustment to conflict. The paper first presents the East Pokot as a people, their history, brief interaction with the central government, and their geographical region. In the second part, the paper discusses the patterns of adjustment to conflict. The paper argues that in the face of sustained conflict occasioned by loss of livestock, which is their mainstay, many East Pokot families have turned to non-pastoralist livelihoods. In particular recourse to beekeeping, crop based farming, wage employment and business are some of the cultural adaptations now preferred, yet they were traditionally despised as bases of livelihood. Additionally, enhanced inflexibility and going to previously no-go-zones are some of the risky decisions they now have to take as a response to conflict*

### 1.1 Introduction

Pastoralist communities, especially in Kenya, have always been presented as warlike. The most celebrated and path breaking study by Fukui and Turton, *Warfare Among East African Herders* (1979), offers the most initial and systematic account of conflict among pastoralists in East Africa. Recent writers including Jitokeze (2012), Ng'ang'a (2012), Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (2013), Practical Action (2003) and Schilling *et al* (2012), have all exhaustively discussed conflict between the East Pokot pastoralists and neighbouring pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. A common thread among these scholars is their agreement that the conflict has impacted on all the communities at both micro and macro levels, and the East Pokot being in the central region geographically, have been the most affected. Pkaiya *et al* in *Indigenous Democracy* (2004) discuss how the Pokot, Turkana, Samburu and Marakwet conflict could be resolved using indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms.

In view of the foregoing, this paper focuses on the East Pokot pastoralists and their cultural adjustment to conflict and the choices they make for a livelihood given that the livestock enterprise has become unreliable. The paper argues that in response to conflict with neighbouring communities, the East Pokot have taken up non pastoralist lifestyles and livelihood activities that they previously looked down upon as a preserve of the poor (*chepleng*).

### The East Pokot Culture and Economy

Stewart (1950) (quoted in Republic of Kenya 1950) termed people of East Pokot as the Suk and that they were roughly 60% pastoral and 40% agricultural. They broke off from the original Nandi settlement around Mt. Elgon, and represent the most primitive form of Nandi. Their language is Nandi in structure and in much of their vocabulary. The Suk call themselves Pokot (*pronounced Pokaut*). Suk is the name given to them by the Maasai because they lived in the hills and carried a "chok" which is a short curved bill-hook, probably for cultivation. Suk is also a pejorative Maasai name for 'ignorant' people living in the hills. This shows that the East Pokot people were initially agriculturalists, even though now they are entirely pastoralists. Initially, they lived in the territory towards the western end of Cheregani Hills at Mt. Sekerr (most probably Mt. Elgon). After some interaction with the Karimojong and Turkana, the East Pokot acquired many of these communities' customs, such as singing, baboon dance and *sapana* rite of passage before they moved to the lowlands. The East Pokot's diet consisted of finger millet, honey and game. They dared not come to the plains because the Samburu would not allow them in the Kerio Valley and the Turkana to the North West. Later the Samburu left Kerio Valley and moved eastwards. This allowed the East Pokot to descend from the hills and occupy the land vacated by the Samburu.

The East Pokot eventually pushed as far as Tiati Hills but were prevented from going further by the Maasai. Beech (1910), as cited in the Kolloa Affray Report of 1951, described the Pokot as “intelligent but surprisingly honest, exceptionally vain but very generous, suspicious of one’s motives, selfish and without affection. A savage and uncivilized people to whom death is the greatest evil and who have but a short span of life.” Later on, an unnamed District Commissioner in an undated colonial correspondence said that the “East Pokot are very backward and conservative to a degree and it will be a long uphill task to win their confidence and secure any active interest and support from them to any scheme which may be inaugurated for their benefit.”

The Pokot are divided into two sections, the agricultural and pastoral. This paper focuses on the pastoral group. The difference between them is clear, including their customs and physique. The pastoralists (now the East Pokot) are rich in cattle, goats and sheep and look with disdain upon the agriculturalists to whom they refer as “the men of the seed”. The agriculturalists (the West Pokot) have infused crop based cultivation with livestock husbandry, hence pass more accurately as the agro-pastoralists. The agriculturalists are very inferior to the pastoralists in physique due to the fact that their diet consists almost entirely of sorghum (and now maize), varied occasionally with little goat meat. The East Pokot pastoralists in Baringo County live in the plains. Their mode of living is simple and befits a people who are constantly moving with families and herds in search of water and grazing. Their food consists of blood and milk varied by a little grain. In a 1951 Republic of Kenya report, the East Pokot’s wealth of cattle makes them rank with the Maasai as the most opulent Africans, and their wants outside their stock are negligible. The East Pokot are divided into four main clans: The Talai / Kasait clan is predominantly in Churo area, the Cheprai / Kaprai occupies the central part, including Chemolingot / Nginyang region, while the Kolowa clan is in Kerio Valley. Lastly, the Cheman clan is in Chepkaalacha region.

This paper partly presents the form and mix of social adjustments that the East Pokot people, in their various clans, have made in response to conflict involving them. Given the intensity of conflicts, insecurity and disruption of livelihoods, the East Pokot possess important knowledge in order to manage the livestock, protect their livelihoods, their own safety and survival in an unpredictable social environment. The challenge of conflict is even greater during *Koriei* season (dry season / drought) than *pung’at* (wet / rain season) when certain decisions must be made and no-go zones, especially the volatile border areas, accessed. The number of guns owned is today (but previously rainfall, drought and disease) the critical factor that influences East Pokot people’s decisions. The East Pokot know the “where” areas of endemic conflict and insecurity, but in situations that warrant going against practice and convention the “where” are used, but at great risk and with elaborate precaution. Fukui and Markarkis (1994) report that the stakes and risks associated with pastoral decision making are high, but insecurity which characterizes large sections of the rangelands in the Horn of Africa, in particular the border areas, is of increasing concern. The many and everyday decisions the East Pokot make today are largely governed by the pastoralists’ evil of insecurity. Conflict constrains herd movements in some areas and also makes pastoralists do things they are not accustomed to. Going beyond the popular images of the East Pokot as “warlike, primitive, suspicious and obsessed with cattle” prevalent in popular media, they do other things largely non-pastoral or peripheral to pastoralism but which help to augment, diversify or negate pastoral livelihood. What they do, whether large or small, are pursued either as the main source of livelihood activity or as a back-up to the livestock enterprise.

## **New Livelihood Opportunities and Adjustments**

### **a) Enhanced Inflexibility**

On all fronts, there is less migration today compared to the past. The *koriei* season pastures in Akoret, Mt. Kulal, Silali, Amaiya, Churo and the riverine pastures along Lake Baringo are no longer easily accessible today. Churo area, although the most watered place in East Pokot, is no longer accessible due to settled agriculture and individualized communal farms. Generally, East Pokot mobility has been critically constrained given the position they find themselves in. Yet, as Little (2003), observes in reference to Somali pastoralists, the maintenance of mobility as a risk management strategy is a key reason why the livestock sector did not suffer considerably compared to other sectors when the Somalia government collapsed. The same cannot be said of the East Pokot and that is why they are not as successful as before. Given the hostility in the volatile environment, and in order to survive, they have taken on a posture of militancy to live in the unpredictable hostile environment. Maintaining a reliable and favourable access to pasture and water which the East Pokot do not, account for the precipitous position they are in today. The current inflexibility to migrate to distant pastures (often on the borders) when necessity demands is a key reason why the East Pokot herders now live by the precipice.

It also explains why they have not successfully avoided the atrocities of drought compared to settled farmers. They cannot move at will when danger looms or strikes. The East Pokot no longer have unfettered access to their traditional grazing areas, especially when issues of identity and space become overly contested. Besides conflict, the introduction of wildlife sanctuaries like Rukus near Chepkalacha and the proposed Altungai in Amaiya area, intensive agriculture in Churo and irrigation agriculture along Lake Baringo further compromise their movement. In the 2007-2009 drought the importance of mobility for East Pokot was dramatized. Confronted by the dim prospects for survival, most East Pokot pastoralists did not consider options beyond their territory, while the traditional pasture reserve areas were too risky, leading to livestock losses averaging 80%. The enhanced constriction puts the East Pokot on the precipice of survival. One business man, commenting on the 2007 – 2009 drought, narrated as follows:

In 2008 when drought intensified I split my livestock into three. Goats and sheep remained with me at Kadingding, cattle were driven to Nyahururu and camels to Nginyang. Previously we used to go to Mr. Kulal but today you can't do so due to the marauding Ngoroko bandits.

Studies on pastoralists' decision making before movement have tended to show that no single factor is responsible for when and where to move to, although one factor is dominant. Dyson-Hudson and McCabe (1985), in a study of the Turkana Ngisonyoka migration, ranked environment as most significant at 60.5% and security at 22.3% that influence migration, when and where. In East Pokot, responses from key informants and FGDs showed that their decisions were localized, depending on where one lives. Those who live to the northern regions bordering Turkana ranked security highest, compared to those in the western, southern and eastern parts who ranked environment highest and security was second. However, no single reason was sufficient to explain pastoral movements, but demonstrates the most probable principal cause for migration.

According to East Pokot elders, although relations between them and their neighbours are dominated by common suspicion, they could not negotiate with them since their neighbours' situation was equally precarious, but more so, previous negotiations and terms of rescue had been abused by the East Pokot so they could not take advantage of this option. Lack of reciprocal grazing rights with Turkana is deep-rooted, while the level of mistrust and suspicion between them is high. The frequent East Pokot incursions and livestock raids into Tugen, Marakwet and Samburu territory diminished or extinguished the possibility of such a negotiation. The recent East Pokot attack on the Njemps functioned to extinguish the remaining and supposedly friendlier neighbour who is now more reluctant than ever before to welcome any more advances. Hence, the lack of flexibility, so central to a pastoralist enterprise, makes the East Pokot live by the precipice.

### **b) Wage Labour Options**

Following the decimation of East Pokot livestock, especially in the Turkana and Samburu border regions of Akoret, Kapau, Chesawach, Mt. Kulal, Silali and Amaiya regions, many East Pokot families migrated to the trading centres of Amaiya, Churo, Tangelbei, Loruk, Nginyang, and Chemolingot to take up paid employment for a livelihood. Many of them, male and female, are now employed as casual labourers, hotel attendants and domestic workers. Due to conflict, they have been forced to undertake tasks that were traditionally viewed as demeaning. According to East Pokot elders, the Pokot do not like servitude, sleeping in another persons' homestead or begging. Those are attributes associated with the Turkana and other poor people. A casual observation of shops and hotels at Chemolingot, Nginyang, Tangelbei and Churo centres showed that out of 67 grocery shops, food kiosks and hotels 52 (77.6%) were attended to by young Pokot women. An informal discussion with Miss Chepkoronto Losililee (*a pseudo name*), a food kiosk attendant at Chemolingot one evening revealed a lot of information about the East Pokot who have been forced on to a life that is not theirs. She said:

I am 15 years old, a 3<sup>rd</sup> born in our family of seven. I did not go to school. I am employed by a fellow Pokot to work in this hotel. I have been employed for three months now. Our home was in Kapau (in Akoret area). My father was killed in 2006 during a Turkana raid in which we lost all livestock so we came to our uncle in Chemsik. That is where I was introduced to this person who was in need of a person to work in his hotel. The problem with this work is men who keep coming, they have many questions and many of them do not know Pokot language. This job is not good because you stand most of the time, there are too many people always looking at me. After some time I will go back home so that my uncle can buy us some cattle. In the hotel milk is measured in cups and you cannot even take it yet our life is milk.

The story of Miss Chepokoronto Losililee reflects the experiences of many East Pokot youth whose families lost livestock and have been forced to move to town looking for a livelihood. Her uneasiness in a town environment reflects the East Pokot's distaste and fear of town. In spite of her obtaining a wage, she understands it as servitude, an attribute the East Pokot do not cherish. For a people so proud of their culture being forced to engage in livelihood activities not of their choice, and in a foreign environment indeed reflects changed values forced on them and demonstrates that indeed they have difficulty.

### c) Crop Farming

Following the decimation of livestock due to conflict and recurrent drought, many families have taken up crop farming especially in the higher and cooler areas of Churo. Churo was originally a *koriei* (dry) season pasture, but it has consistently become an agricultural zone as pastoralists have taken to opportunistic use of their land by increasingly cultivating fast maturing vegetables, maize, beans and onions. During an FGD in Churo, it was pointed out that those who had diversified into agriculture or took up agriculture alone had higher chances of maintaining their livelihoods during drought or when they lose livestock to raiders than those who were dependent on livestock alone. In order to undertake cropping, one had to fence off (privatize) public land to protect the crops from domestic and wild animals. While undertaking a transect walk through farms and homesteads, at least seventeen farmers had a grain store, which implies that they are more relatively food secure even if they lost livestock. Individuals are increasingly enforcing their rights to private ownership and use of land, which threatens East Pokot pastoralism by disrupting well established mobility mechanisms they use to cope. Although Churo is not very prone to insecurity, it is still not available for pastoralism any more. Yet those who have privatized land in Churo still maintain stable livestock herds in the drier and other areas of the common land hence constraining land use in another area. In the drier areas, pastoralists have taken up opportunistic cultivation of maize, beans and vegetables whenever the rains are good. The scale of this uptake is high. After good rains in early 2010, there were many maize farms and bean crops observed across the entire landscape as one drove along the Loruk – Churo Road. A local religious leader along this road said:

almost every household (*kau*) had maize and / or bean crop this year. People have discovered recently that they could plant and harvest and indeed they get good harvest if the rain comes 4-5 times in a season. That has helped many people.

Traditionally the East Pokot, like many other pastoralists, despise crop cultivators. However, given the predicament they find themselves in today, they have increasingly taken up crop farming, traditionally reserved for the *chepleng* (poor). Marshall (1994), using archeological evidence, shows that pastoralists domesticated sorghum and millet in a number of places in the Sahelian Zone around 3500 BC following climate change, and this adaptation partly explains the East Pokot recourse to crop cultivation. It also shows that pastoralists often cultivate when the situation is conducive.

### d) Beekeeping

According to East Pokot elders in FGDs, bee keeping was started by people of the Chumo age group (born around 1900-1910). Initially the East Pokot were not honey hunters but relied on the Tugen and Marakwet for a considerable supply of honey during harvesting. They learnt the art of *maghen* (hive) making and beekeeping from the Marakwet and, to a lesser extent, the Tugen whom they called *Chepleng* or those with no wealth – cattle. It is therefore possible that those East Pokot who acquired the art of beekeeping must have been the *Chepleng*. However, with the deteriorating relations with the Marakwet, the local *Chepleng* filled in the gap of demand for honey as the traditional sources became unreliable. The local sources of honey did not satisfy internal demand for traditional purposes. Before 1980, very few East Pokot were known to harvest honey as a vocation.

However, following the incessant Turkana (*Ngoroko*) raids for livestock in the 1980s and peaking in 1996 when they made the deepest incursion (since the 1918 raid) upto Chemolingot, many families were forced to migrate and / or look for alternative livelihoods. The 1984 drought marked a turning point in bee keeping that saw large scale take-up of the Kenya Top Bar Hives (KTBH) that had been initially introduced in 1981/1982 by a Mr. Peterson at Maron centre. This was after realizing the potential of bee keeping in terms of contribution to people's welfare. In 1981/82 the Ministry of Agriculture began rigorous campaigns for modern bee keeping. In 1985 the Kenya Freedom From Hunger Council (KFFC) launched a KTBH distribution programme to spur alternative income generation activities among East Pokot households. According to key informants at Maron area, 1000 *maghen* were distributed with high occupation levels of 72.5% in Tangulbei and 82% in Nginyang.

At an average of 19 kg of honey per harvest per *maghen*, a total of 14, 677.5kg of honey worth KShs. 293,550 was obtained in 1990 (KFFC, 1990). The FGD participants identified the names of trees whose flowers produce high quality honey and improve bee colony strength. These include the *Talamou* (*Acacia melifera*), *Chemanga* (*Acacia senegal*), *Anywa* (*Acacia ruficiens*), *Ses* (*Acacia tortilis*), *Atat* (*Acacia elatior*), *Kiptari* (*Acacia brevispica*), *Kamal* (*Acacia africana*), *Amekunyan* (*Sia* sp), *Askuruyon* (*Tribulus terrestris*), and *Chepkoit* (*Evlangia* sp) (Ministry of Livestock Development, Chemolingot, 2010).

It was indicated that honey production is highest in months after adequate rainfall. Therefore the period 2007-2009 experienced prolonged drought hence honey production was low. Areas with dense cover of the appropriate trees are the leading producers of honey. They include Barpello, Karpunyang, Loiwet in Kerio Valley; Chemsik, Maron, Kamrio Chepinjip, Kedipo, Kositei to the West of Chemolingot and Katuit, Kadingding and Kechii in Tangelbei. The traditional *maghen* are made of wood, especially *Ficus thoningii*, *Terminalia* and *Euphorbia* trees which average 1m x 0.4 cm in diameter. These trees are ideal because as they age, they grow hollow in the centre. *Maghen* are usually hung on trees along the river valley and nobody can dare steal them lest they are cursed. Certain trees are owned by particular individuals on which they hung their *maghen*. Only a few people, largely specialists, harvested wild honey from trees, stones, caves or holes.

Traditionally, honey was produced for making beer meant for rituals or ceremonies, appeasement of elders, and as medicine for women (as a painkiller) soon after delivery. The traditional *maghen* takes a long time to prepare, usually cutting, curing and hollowing out takes an average of three months. The traditional *maghen* is sold for an average of KShs. 300 per piece, but the prices rise where honey production is highest as in Kedipo and Kapunyang to KShs. 500. The *maghen* is usually deployed during flowering season, when bee swarms are abundant either between tree branches or by wire or rope about 6-8 metres from the ground to avoid *kougha* or *koghie* (honey badger or *Melivoera capensis*), *kinkina* (tree squirrel), *kendele* (black ants or *Severa spp*), and *kisemra* (wax moth or *Galleria meloner*). Theft of a *maghen* attracts a fine of six goats or two cows including other charges for the sitting *kokwo* if the offender is found or owns up, but if the thief is not found or fails to own up, the *maghen* owner will pronounce a curse. Even then, theft of a *maghen* was reportedly unheard of, therefore not of concern.

Bee keeping has experienced a significant transformation from the late 1990s when interest suddenly arose following intense conflict and introduction of modern *maghen*. Many people also realized that it was an easy source of income with very little investment in terms of time or other resources and not a priority for livestock rustlers. The introduction of the Kenya Top Bar Hives opened a new chapter in bee keeping as it is now open to anybody, rich or poor. Its production is still male dominated but women are dominant at marketing, especially at group level. Besides the KFFC, other development actors actively promote bee keeping. They include Arid Lands Resources Management Programme of the Office of the President, the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru and Heifer International. They all promote and sell to farmers modern *maghen*. There is now competition among households for ownership of *maghen*, for it is now a useful resource whose product does not decline. For example, key informants indicated that in the 2007/2008/2009 drought period when the price of livestock plummeted, that of honey considerably appreciated, which again attracted those who were still skeptical to redouble their efforts. It boosted the ability of many households to pull through the drought period. Although no systematic marketing structure for honey exists, there is always a ready market (Ministry of Livestock, Chemolingot, 2009). Given this interest in, and growth of beekeeping and its returns, it is necessary to capture related data in tabular forms for ease of comprehension. Thus, Table 1 below presents the number of bee hives in various divisions while table 2 shows honey production and value in 2008 and 2009.

**Table 1: Number of Recorded *maghen* in Production Areas**

Division	Type and Number		
	Log	KTBH	Langstthroth
Nginyang/Mondi	5,780	2,140	170
Tangelbei/Churo	4,387	730	300
Kolloa	5,560	1,500	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,727</b>	<b>4,360</b>	<b>595</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Livestock, Chemolingot, 2010

**Table 2: Honey Production in 2008 and 2009**

Division	Quantity and Amount per kg	Value (KShs.)
Nginyang/Mondi	5510 containers 17kgs @ 100*	9,367,000
Tangulbei/Churo	1343 containers 17kgs @ 100	2,283,000
Kolloa	2302 containers 17kgs @ 100	3,913,000
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>15,563,000</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Livestock, Chemolingot, 2009

\*Local people indicated they sell at KShs. 180 per litre of crude honey currently

There is no systematic marketing of honey. It is largely sold to local East Pokot middle men in crude form. They collect it from households and sell it on market days: Nginyang on Saturday, Tangulbei on Friday, Loruk on Tuesday, Churo on Wednesday, Chepkalacha on Tuesday and Amaiya on Thursday. On this, one respondent said:

a crop of local middlemen obtain it from local markets and sell at Nakuru, Mogotio, Eldama Ravine, Eldoret, Kabarnet, Iten and Marigat. Lack of organized marketing, refining for value addition, lack of wax processing technology and dominance of indigenous *maghen* are identified as the key impediments to improved honey production.

Although, the potential for honey production in East Pokot is considerably high and figures scanty, it is increasingly becoming the alternative for many and supporting more and more numbers, many of whom have lost livestock and / or are keen to diversify their livelihoods. No study exists to show the extent of bee hive ownership per household in East Pokot, but a crude assessment by FGD members, key informants, Ministry of Livestock Development at Chemolingot, Arid Lands Resource Management Project and middlemen put is at 40-50% of the households. A key informant said the following of beekeeping:

all through East Pokot, the number of bee keeping has considerably increased and the quantity of honey production gone up. The honey production is for market, unlike previously when it was produced for domestic consumption or ritual. At Maron Centre for example, there has been a big honey and wax processor and collection point. If you visit Nginyang on a market day, that is when you will see many women selling processed and unprocessed honey as well as buyers.

#### e) Livestock Marketing

The marketing of livestock has always been part of the East Pokot landscape. All along they were the suppliers of livestock at Nginyang River market every Saturday. The longtime and established buyers were the Tugen and Kikuyu from Marigat, Mogotio and Nakuru. They enjoyed a monopolistic position on livestock pricing. According to the FGD participants of Nginyang and Chemolingot in particular, indigenous livestock traders at Nginyang, the Tugen and Kikuyu traders would form a cartel and agree beforehand on the maximum prices for particular livestock irrespective of size. Alternatively, they would deliberately arrive at Nginyang Market late, find desperate livestock sellers afraid that they would go back with their livestock and, out of desperation, the sellers would dispose off their livestock at appallingly low prices. Hjort (1981) captures this scenario when he says that the purchasing trick of the main buyers of livestock favoured them, thereby decreasing the profit of small producers and manipulating the timing of sales and auctions. Nginyang Market is the oldest and most famous livestock market in East Pokot and serves areas such as Kapedo, Mt. Kulal, Silali, Chemsik, Kositei, Maron and the eastern parts of Kerio valley.

Currently there are many changes concerning livestock marketing in East Pokot. New livestock markets have sprung up. The Ministry of Livestock Development, Department of Livestock Production, Chemolingot in a (2009) Annual Report indicated the following livestock marketing yards: Tangulbei, Kokwototo, Amaiya, Loruk, Chesirimioni, Nginyang, Kolloa and Kapunyang. Key informant interviews indicated Churo and Chepkalacha as additional livestock markets. Although all markets are accessible, Amaiya remains volatile due to East Pokot – Samburu intermittent conflicts, which make traders not reach the market on some days. The County Council of East Pokot levies charges on livestock as follows: KShs. 60 for a goat or sheep and Kshs. 200 for a cow. In both cases the buyer and seller contribute 50% of the total levy.

#### f) Livestock Trade Volumes

The table below presents livestock numbers captured at market centres per Division.

**Table 3: Divisional Livestock Sales in 2009**

Division	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Camels	Donkeys
Nginyang/Mondi	1,352	31,653	1,195	114	67
Tangulbei/Churo	719	24,163	1,262	83	112
Kolloa	513	16,064	1,301	25	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,584</b>	<b>71,880</b>	<b>3,758</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>232</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Livestock, Chemolingot, 2009

An overall comparison with 2008 figures shows that there was a general decline in livestock sales as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Livestock Sales 2008 and 2009 Compared**

Division	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Camel	Donkey
2008	6,023	61,314	5,817	230	783
2009	2,584	71,880	5,758	222	232
% change	Less 57%	17%	Less 45%	Less 4%	Less 70%

**Source:** Ministry of Livestock, Chemolingot, 2009

The reason for the general decline was attributed to massive migration to other districts and far off areas due to the drought. However, more goats were sold because they were within the divisions since they are more adaptable to drier conditions hence available for sale. Goats' superior adaptability to drought is also noted by Fratkin and Smith (1994) and Horowitz (1981), who also show that small stock (goats) are an important part of a pastoral economy because of their high reproductive rate, ability to survive in arid conditions, easy convertibility to cash and a ready source of meat. To give a clear impression of the economic value of the livestock in East Pokot during the drought period, we summarise in Table 5 below the market prices of livestock in 2009.

**Table 5: Average Livestock Prices in 2009**

Livestock species / Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cattle	7579	6245	6909	5947	5808	5155	6164	6200	6422	7879	7802	8838
Camel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goats	1060	957	876	828	800	780	805	820	1007	1321	1215	1335
Sheep	857	683	613	740	630	600	602	602	889	902	935	1196
Donkey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Source:** Ministry of Livestock, Chemolingot, 2009

The overall livestock prices in Kshs per livestock species in 2009 were: cattle 9940, camels 8440, goats, 1235, sheep 945 and donkeys 4000. For a comparative sense, we also show in Table 6 below the value of livestock sales outside Baringo District in 2009.

**Table 6: Value of Livestock Sold Outside Baringo District in 2009**

Livestock species	No. of livestock	Average Price in Kshs.	Total value in KShs.
Cattle	2,584	9,940	25, 684, 960
Goats	71,880	1,235	88, 771, 800
Sheep	3,758	945	3, 551, 310
Camel	222	8,480	1,882, 560
Donkey	232	4,000	928, 000
<b>Total</b>			<b>120, 818, 630</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Livestock, Chemolingot, 2009

Although the total value was KShs. 120 million in 2009, it was less by KShs. 25.4 million of the 2008 value.

**Table 7: Value of Livestock Slaughtered and Consumed Locally in 2009**

Livestock species	No. of livestock	Carcass weight in kgs ' 000s	Price per Kilogramme	Value in Kshs.
Cattle	38	180	160	1,094,400
Goats	2820	12	200	6,768,000
Camel	130	250	160	520 ,22
Sheep	21	10	200	42,000
Total				13,104, 400

**Source:** Ministry of Livestock, Chemolingot, 2009

The value of livestock consumed locally in 2008 was KShs. 3,403,820 compared to KShs. 13,104,400 in 2009. This increase in consumption was largely owing to goats which were available throughout the year as other livestock had been driven afar due to drought. (Ministry of Livestock Development. Chemolingot, 2009). Although the livestock value expressed in monetary terms looks impressive, it does not present the total picture of the value of livestock sales and consumption in East Pokot since a considerable proportion of livestock sold or consumed is not captured hence the value is under reported.

As initially observed, livestock trade was largely dominated by the Tugen and the Kikuyu up to mid 1990s. It is until recently, in early 2000, that local East Pokot business men rose to be a central part of the trade. Apart from obtaining livestock directly from the herders to the market and playing the role of middlemen, they are now end buyers and sellers to the outside markets. Their entry into the livestock trade and dominance in the initial stages of the trade and forays into the external market is something new. The rise of local and informal livestock markets controlled by local people (without county council control) is equally a new phenomenon. One businessman at Tangelbei said that

the main livestock players are now the indigenous East Pokot who control the flow of livestock and have heavily invested in lorry transport business to ferry livestock from East Pokot to the destination areas. On the return journey they carry merchandise for the business people in the interior. The indigenous business people are now the new lords. They have eclipsed the traditional rich men.

The business man further goes on,

The destinations for livestock from East Pokot markets are: Laikipia, Marigat, Mogotio, Kabarnet, Nakuru, Iten, Eldoret, Eldama Ravine, Nairobi, Naivasha and the Athi River based Kenya Meat Commission. The livestock traders are today more diversified than before. The other traders are: Tugen, Kikuyu, Samburu, Somali, Pokot and Burji.

There has arisen a new local business elite never envisaged before, and which has equally become rich in livestock ownership since most of the proceeds from the trade are used in buying more livestock. This finding is similar to earlier findings by Hjort (1981) who in a study of the inter relationship between herds, trade and grain found that the Turkana who practiced fishing utilized the money obtained to buy livestock.

### **Conclusion**

The adjustment of the East Pokot pastoralists is presented as a response to conflict. Inter ethnic conflict has forced a once proud community to take up livelihood activities that they traditionally despised. In spite of that, the adjustments represents a rational response to conflict induce changed circumstances.



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