

**Addis Ababa University**

**School of Graduate Studies**

**Department of Social Anthropology**

**The Dynamics of Cross-Border Cattle-Raiding  
along the Ethio-South Sudan Border: The Case  
of Gambella Peoples' National Regional State**

**By**

**Roza Asrar Yenus**

**December 2017**

**Addis Ababa**

**Addis Ababa University**

**School of Graduate Studies**

**Department of Social Anthropology**

**The Dynamics of Cross-Border Cattle-Raiding  
along the Ethio-South Sudan Border: The Case  
of Gambella Peoples' National Regional State**

**By**

**Roza Asrar Yenus**

**December 2017**

**Addis Ababa**

**Addis Ababa University**

**School of Graduate Studies**

**Department of Social Anthropology**

**The Dynamics of Cross-Border Cattle-Raiding  
along the Ethio-South Sudan Border: The Case  
Gambella Regional State**

**By**

**Roza Asrar Yenus**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis  
Ababa University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts in Social Anthropology**

**Advisor: Ayalew Gebre (Ph.D.)**

**December 2017**

**Addis Ababa**

APPROVAL

The Dynamics of Cross-Border Cattle-Raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan  
Border: The Case Gambella Regional State

Ayalew Gebre (PhD)

Name of Advisor:



Signature

25/12/2017

Date

Name of Internal Examiner

Mamo Hobo

Signature



Date

25 Dec 2017

Name of External Examiner

Fana Gebret

Signature



Date

25 Dec 2017

Department Coordinator

Signature

Date

Handwritten title or header at the top of the page.

Main body of handwritten text, consisting of several paragraphs of cursive script.

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
List of figures.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Local words and Terms.....	vii
Acronyms.....	viii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1. Background.....	1
1.2. Statement of the problem.....	4
1.3. Research questions.....	5
1.4. Research Objectives.....	6
1.5. Relevance of the Study.....	6
1.6. Challenges of the study.....	6
1.7. Structure of the study.....	7
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Empirical Studies.....	9
2.1. Cattle-raiding.....	9
2.2. Cultural/ecological analysis.....	12
2.3. The Role of Modern Arms on Cattle Raiding.....	14
2.4. Climate change and environmental security.....	16
2.5. The "new" type of cattle-raiding.....	18
Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Methods of Data Collection.....	21
3.1. The Relevance of Ethnographic Methodology in the Analysis of Cattle-raiding.....	21
3.2. The Ethnographic Setting and Site Description.....	23

3.3. Sampling Techniques .....	28
3.3.1. Selection of Informants .....	29
3.3.2. In-depth Personal Interviews.....	29
3.3.4. Short Interviews with Government Officials.....	31
3.3.5. Micro-Cattle Census.....	31
3.3.6. Payment of Bride wealth and Its correlation with Herd size.....	32
3.4. Government Reports And Analysis of Document .....	33
3.5. Reflections on the Methodology: Challenges and Limitations .....	33
Chapter Four: Diminishing Herds, Bride wealth, and Cattle-Raiding.....	35
4.1. Introduction .....	35
4.2. Bride wealth and Marriage .....	35
4.3. Diminishing herds and decline of bride Wealth.....	42
4.4. Bride wealth and Cattle-raiding .....	45
Chapter Five: Cattle Raiding And Other Actors.....	50
5.1. Actors in Cattle-Raiding.....	51
5.1.1. Jikany Nuer and Lou-Nuer .....	51
5.1.2. Jikany Nuer and Murle .....	55
5.2. Markets and Cattle-Raiding .....	61
5.2.1. Markets and Cattle-Raiding in Lari .....	61
5.2.2. Guit-guite and the hidden trade in cattle in Lari .....	64
5.3. Actors along the Border and the April 15, 2016, Attack.....	67
5.3.1. Actors along the Border.....	67
5.3.2. April 15, 2016, Attack in Lari.....	69
5.4. Proliferation of Arms and Uncoordinated Disarmament along the Border .....	72

Chapter Six: Analysis .....	77
6.1. The cattle-raiding phenomenon and its relation to bride price payments in Lari .....	77
6.2. Cross-border conflicts: Resource scarcity or Political Ecology? .....	79
6.2.1. Resource scarcity: .....	79
6.2.2. Political Ecology .....	81
6.3. New Types of raiding: Introduction of money and Market in Lari, revival of trade in the other side of the border and increasing number of marriages .....	84
6.4. Politics at play: Actors, gun, and regional political process .....	87
Summary and Conclusion .....	89
References .....	92
Annexes .....	98

**List of figures**

A Nuer cattle on the main road from Lari to Gambella near Riek village, December 2015 ..... 35

A young debited girl for 23 cattle for her older brother's marriage, Pagak, August 2015 .....38

Discussing bride price arrangements with young Nuer men, Lari town, August, 2015. .... 42

Armed Nuer heading to a border post Pagak in Bulimkun *Kebele*, August, 2015 ..... 50

Children abducted in 2011 and returned back in 2014, Lari, August 2015. .... 60

Early morning Saturday Cattle market, Lari, August 2017 .....61

Majak Chol, tax collector levying taxes, Lari cattle market, August, 2017. ....63

Cattle for sale along the road to Pagak, August, 2017 .....64

Three children in Bulimkun, returned in August after four months, Lari, August 2017. ....70

## Acknowledgements

First thanks to almighty Allah who helped me to overcome all the challenges along the way.

Throughout this M.A study, many people supported me in various ways yet it would be folly even to attempt to list them all. Nonetheless, I want to acknowledge with deep gratitude my supervisor Dr. Ayalew Gebre for his invaluable guidance, support and time given for steering the entire project right from scratch to the final product.

I would like also to express my warmest, profoundest thanks to the people in NORAD Project for their generous grant to carry out the M.A study at Addis Ababa University, particularly coordinators of NORAD at the Department of Social Anthropology and staff of the Department. Many friends at the department supported me on this journey and have to be honored.

Special thanks is also owing to Lari Wereda Administration and many of my informants both in Lari and Gambella who made my time with them meaningful and successful.

I would also like to express my warmest gratitude to Bremen University for inviting me in the summer school "Borders, Border thinking, Borderlands" Summer school in May 2015. Thanks for all participants and comments which shaped this study.

Finally, the very special people whom I have no words to thank are my family, my husband Mossa, I am much indebted to your comments, advice, and encouragement and unrelenting confidence in me.

## **Abstract**

*Cattle-raiding and counter-raiding by pastoralists have a long history among East African herders. The practice has gone through various transformations over the past half a century. With the changing dynamics of the practice of cattle-raiding along the Ethiopia- South Sudan borderlands, this study questions the existing established assumptions about the practice of cattle-raiding as 'ecologically functional' i.e. to restock the herds, all within certain cultural rules and codes designed by elders and chiefs. This M.A. thesis asked basic questions about relations between the cultural practice of bride wealth payments and the practice of raiding, the introduction of cash/market economy and the involvement of actors other than pastoralists in the practice of raiding and proliferation of gun and the civil war in the South Sudan. Through the ethnographic methods of micro-cattle census, depth-personal interviews, personal observations and key informant interviews, the result of the study showed that the traditional forms of raiding practiced for centuries along the Ethiopia-South Sudan border lands have given up to the new forms of raiding which has a predatory form characterized by more deaths, more intense, more cattle taken at once, use of automatic weapons and breakdown of the social contract.*

## **Key words**

**Cattle-raiding, Borderlands, Gambella, Ethiopia, South Sudan**

## Local words and Terms

1. <i>Ciek</i>	Wife
2. <i>Dak</i>	Divorce
3. <i>Dhom</i>	Adultery
4. <i>Guite guite</i>	Young men who do not have a father or close relatives
5. <i>Hok</i>	Cattle, plural
6. <i>Hokuen</i>	Bride-wealth
7. <i>Kuel-Ciek</i>	Stealing wife
8. <i>Kuel-hok</i>	Cattle Stealing
9. <i>Kuen</i>	Marriage
10. <i>Kueneangdar</i>	Formal way of marriage arrangement
11. <i>Kuenkuel</i>	Informal way of marriage arrangement
12. <i>Pech-hok</i>	Cattle raiding
13. <i>Puothkuen</i>	Blessing of marriage
14. <i>Qeret</i>	Tax
15. <i>Qeret-Sebsabi</i>	Tax collector
16. <i>Thak</i>	Ox
17. <i>Thopniciek</i>	Wife inheritance
18. <i>Tuut</i>	Bull
19. <i>Yang</i>	Cattle, singular

## Acronyms

1. CPA Comprehensive Peace Agreement
2. ENDF Ethiopian National Defence Forces
3. EPPF Ethiopian Peoples Patriotic Front
4. EPUF Ethiopian Patriotic United Front
5. GPLM/F Gambella Peoples Liberation Movement/ Front
6. GPRS Gambella Peoples Regional State
7. IRC International Rescue Committee
8. OLF Oromo Liberation Front
9. PDF Popular Defence Force
10. SAF Sudan Armed Forces
11. SPLA – IO Sudanese People Liberation Army-In Opposition
12. SPLM/A Sudanese People liberation Movement/ Army
13. SSDF South Sudan Defence Force
14. SSIM South Sudan Independent Movement
15. STDs Sexually Transmitted diseases

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1. Background

A deadly cross-border cattle-raiding and child abduction from Jonglei State of South Sudan into Ethiopia's western Gambella region on Friday, 15 April 2016 left more than 200 dead, more than 100 children abducted and over 2,000 livestock stolen. Ethiopian officials blame Murle tribesmen from Jonglei State of South Sudan for the deadly attacks on 13 villages in Jikaw and Lari *Weredas* of Gambella<sup>1</sup>. In the aftermath, the Ethiopian authorities said they are prepared to pursue the raiders in South Sudan and rescue the kidnapped children.

The raiders were armed with Kalashnikov rifles of good quality with plentiful ammunition. Survivors of the raid confirmed that the raiders wore military-style uniforms and many of them had the same model of plastic white shoe. It is obvious that pastoralist<sup>2</sup> communities in South Sudan are known to commonly position such munitions, and uniforms are also not hard to come by, but the scale of this attack indicates that these attackers were well-armed and organized.

Cattle-raiding and child abduction have long been common across the border between Ethiopia and Sudan but never on such a scale. The scale, organization, and brutality of the April 2016 raid is unique that the people in the area have never experienced it before. Of the approximately 80 injured people who arrived at Gambella town's hospital, more than 50 were women. According

---

<sup>1</sup> Armed men from South Sudan kill 200 people in Ethiopia raid: <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Death-toll-tops-200-in-cross-border-Ethiopia-raid/1066-3165144-12jwff/index.html>

Ethiopia launches military action against S. Sudan's Murle group: <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article58683>

<sup>2</sup> I used the term "pastoralism" in this thesis as it is used to denote a practice "whose main ideology and production strategy is the herding of livestock on an extensive base or in combination with some form of agricultural activity" (Sociology of Insecurity page 3).

to survivors, a few Nuer community militia members with guns retaliated, killing seventy attackers, who wore unmarked military uniforms and carried modern Kalashnikov rifles<sup>3</sup>.

The raiding and counter-raiding of cattle<sup>4</sup> among east African pastoralists lasted for centuries (Markakis, 1994). Although this would seem to be a purely lawless act, it was nevertheless a fairly controlled event. It could occur only against people speaking a different language to that of the raiders in question and was sanctioned by the elder generation who looked for some "moral" reason to order the raid (Fuki and Torton, 1979).

As Fleisher (1998) explained, pastoralists make a distinction between cattle-stealing and raiding. Accordingly, cattle-stealing is only when a few (2-5) individuals are involved and the theft is usually committed at night. The individuals involved may be acting on their own, without permission from group elders. Cattle-raiding, on the other hand, is considered a very different and far more legitimate activity. Larger numbers of individuals are involved and more livestock at stake.

The process of and reasons for cattle-raiding varies from one group to another. Traditionally, among the Jikany Nuer in Gambella, cattle raiding were done during the day times. The magnitude of the raid was fairly small and the number of herds of cattle and other livestock that were raided was equally small. The raids were carried out mainly in the dry season because it is easier to travel through the bushes and wilderness when it is dry than it is wet and muddy. It is difficult to get across to Akobo River with animals when water levels have swelled due to heavy rains. The planning for and blessing of raids was done by elders and Nuer prophets and executed by the youth. Weapons such as arrows, bows, and spears were used. And the number of youths involved in the activity was limited.

---

<sup>3</sup> 'Unbridled violence' in Gambella leaves Ethiopia searching for answers: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/20/unbridled-violence-gambella-ethiopia-south-sudan>

<sup>4</sup> In various literature, the terms cattle raiding and cattle rustling are used simultaneously or even interchangeably. In this thesis, I prefer to use cattle raiding just to use emic expressions of my informants in Lari, Jikaw and Akobo. It has the equivalent meaning of stealing or looting.

The raids were done after thorough reconnaissance with details about the location of the animals and the military strength in respect of the number of men and the arms and munitions of the community that is to be attacked. Once the raiders had obtained all the required information, they pounced on their opponents and scattered entire villages taking the animals, mainly cattle, in the ensuing stampede. The raiders usually took livestock. They rarely killed their victims; first, because the weapons used were not so efficient; and second, their victims were caught by surprise and totally unprepared to mount resistance. It was then left on the affected community to revenge. It was equally the role of elders in both communities to try to create a solution to the problem and stop the tit-for-tat raids.

In recent times, many factors have influenced the earlier forms of raiding and counter-raiding. The influx of modern weapons has transformed the traditional way of cattle-raiding. The traditional rules that governed raiding between the pastoralists have loosened and been partially replaced by more random raids. Traditional raiding and warfare required long training and special skills. Some of these skills are no longer needed when modern weapons are used. Those who were not expected to defend their livestock under traditional rules can now do so with modern weapons. The introduction of sophisticated weapons also resulted in shooting and killing of innocent people as opposed to traditional raiding which spared non-combatants such as women, children, the sick and elderly.

Since the 1990s, cattle-raiding among the different Nuer clans and cross-border Jikany Nuer vs Lou Nuer and Murle have witnessed extreme levels of violence against women, children, and the elderly and property. This has led to increased animosity and hatred among the borderland communities, and a strong desire for revenge further inflaming the situation and leading to more cattle raids.

Unlike the past, raids now are carried out by the youth more often in small groups that are not sanctioned by the elders and local prophets. This has created hatred never seen before. In the event of a raid, those that had lost their livestock were then left with the option of carrying out a counter-raid. The timing of the counter-raid does not really matter. This study tries to understand the dynamics of cattle raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan border in the past and present.

The April 2016 violence is a departure from the forms and practice of cattle-raiding along the border between Ethiopia and South Sudan. The 'redistributive' cattle-raiding practice which we know in the past and which seeks to replenish lost cattle has given way to the more violent predatory and commercial raiding. This new dynamics along the Ethio-South Sudan border is the main concern for my M.A thesis.

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

Cattle-raiding and counter-raiding by pastoralists have a long history in East African herders. Enumerable ethnographic studies so far (Hunlingford, 1953; Spensonr, 1973; Fukui and Torton, 1979; and others) have discussed the issue in depth.

Fuki and Torton (1979: 9-16) have identified many variables as a motivation for cattle-raiding among the East African cattle herders. These include the desire for prestige, to claim victims in association with the death of favorite oxen, for retaliation, for trophies and looting and aim to acquire more cattle or for the purpose of replenishing lost stocks and bridewealth payments. This is an explanation in line with the ecological functionalism model.

The ecological functionalism is a model very much enjoyed in the 1970s which explains cattle theft as "social currency". For this model, the "institutionalized/organized" raiding of livestock is just to distribute livestock over a wider region so that it sustains a general balance of pastoralist economies as a social currency. According to this ecological functionalism model, cattle raiding circulate animal from where they are abundant to a place where they are scarce. In Sweet's terms, it's "a continuously operating system of exchange" (Sweet, 1965:1146) and it is "the whole network of social and ideological relations" (Sweet: 1149).

However, as far as cattle raiding today along Ethio-South Sudan border are concerned, it seems not ecologically functionalism but it may only be ecologically dysfunctional. This is because the cattle stolen in raiding in Pagak, Lari Woreda is not for circulation around that clan in a continuously operating system of exchange, as Sweet claims, but rather for sale somewhere in South Sudan or in Gambella Town for butcher shops and slaughterhouses, hundreds of kilometers far from the local area. Indeed, the cattle stolen are not for homestead cattle kraal of Jikany Nuer but rather for a market that demand cattle for consumption.

My study questions the existing established assumptions about cattle-raiding as 'ecologically functional', and rather seeks to explain cattle-raiding as it is being practiced today along the Ethio-South Sudan border through an ethnography of practice. By documenting how cattle-raiding is conducted in the past and at present, my study will explain the changing faces of cattle-raiding along the porous Ethio-South Sudan borderlands.

Thus, I purpose that the current dynamic cattle-raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan border cannot simply be explained by ecological functionalism model. We need to look for alternative explanations that take into consideration the involvement of other actors other than pastoralists in cattle-raiding, the penetration of market economy and the role of sophisticated weapons among pastoralists in raiding and counter-raiding. Explaining the current dynamic cattle-raiding through these interrelated factors may show how cattle-raiding today are actually practiced along the porous border between Ethiopia and South Sudan.

### **1.3. Research questions**

The central question the thesis wants to answer is the dynamics of cattle raiding and the changing nature of bride price arrangements and factors affecting this dynamics along the Ethio-South Sudan borderlands. The following are sub-questions the study answers.

- What are the relations between cattle-raiding and bride price payment arrangements and the new form of raiding along the borderlands in Gambella?
- Who are the actors, other than pastoralists themselves, involved in cattle-raiding today along the border?
- How opening of the cattle market in Lari and introduction of the cash economy in the post-1991 Gambella affect the patterns of bride price payments and cattle-raiding? and
- In what way the long civil war in Sudan and the influx of modern weapons has changed the dynamics of cattle-raiding along Ethiopian borderlands?

#### **1.4. Research Objectives**

Explaining the dynamic patterns of cattle-raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan borderlands and factors changing the dynamics is the main objective of this study. The following are the specific objectives the study addresses.

- Examine the relationship between cattle-raiding and bride price arrangements in Gambella;
- Identify actors and factors that affect the dynamics of cattle-raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan borderlands; and
- Explain the introduction of the cash economy and the opening of the cattle market in Lari and sophisticated weapons in changing the patterns of cattle-raiding and bride price arrangements among the Nuer in Gambella.

#### **1.5. Relevance of the Study**

The study is very appealing that it examines dynamics of cattle-raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan borderlands in the past and present. It is appealing because it looks at the hearts of the matter when the situation becomes so tense that the two governments (Addis Ababa and Juba) have to involve their military to stop the situation along the borderlands. The recent incidence has also received much public and media attention which narrates the issue the usual "tribal violence". This study provides a much through an in-depth analysis of the issue through ethnography of practice in which it documents the daily experience of the people who have lived and continue to live with it.

The study also looks at the role of automatic weapons and the involvement of other actors other than pastoralists in the current dynamic along the borderlands which could be a remarkable contribution to the understanding of cattle-raiding and counter-raiding as well as the role of weapons and the introduction of markets in the dynamic patterns of this social interaction which is increasingly becoming violent. The study also contributes to genesis of cross-border conflict and its security implications to Gambella Regional State.

#### **1.6. Challenges of the study**

Given the fact that the issue under study is conducted in the region where there are ethnic tensions and insecurity as well as lack of all-weather roads, the researcher faces challenges of

mobility and access to some remote parts of Gambella Region. It is evident that my first proposal was to conduct fieldwork in Akobo Woreda, a border post between Ethiopia and South Sudan, which is a hotspot for raiding and counter-raiding as well as cross-border violent clashes. When I arrived Gambella in early August 2015, the situations in Akobo were worse. The Woreda administrator and other Woreda officials were sitting in Gambella Town. I had to change my plan to another field site.

I chose Lari Woreda and Pagak village to be my field site. Despite the relative calm, the situation in Lari was not good at all given the fighting between the Government in Juba and South Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO), which is based in South Sudanese Pagak, eighteen Kilometers across the border from Ethiopian side of Pagak.

Sometimes, difficult situations create opportunities. Despite the security problem in the area, it was possible to experience the life of the borderland communities in very insecure situations due to the infights across the border, and mainly the unpredictable arrival of Murle and their attack, for instance, April 15, 2016. I was able to overcome these challenges with the help of many Nuer Woreda officials and Nuer assistants who regularly made updates before I move to villages.

### **1.7. Structure of the study**

The thesis is organized into six chapters. The First Chapter is an introduction that introduces readers about the background of the whole study. This background part explains what the study wants to reveal, link and depart from existing study. It also indicated how the study is organized. This part is a general overview of the whole study. The Second Chapter of the study presents a review of related literature conducted so far on the subject. Relevant literature is critically reviewed to situate the study of the issue at hand and to draw a pattern in the literature on cattle-raiding. This review part also shows the gaps in the literature that this study intends to fill.

The Third Chapter is about the methodology and methods of data collection. I explained the relevance of the ethnography of practice in the study of the daily life of people in Lari. Moreover, the role of the micro-cattle census in explaining the relationship between bride price payments and cattle raiding is discussed.

The subsequent chapters present the ethnographic data collected through the methods discussed in chapter three. Chapter Four discusses the correlation between cattle-raiding and bride price arrangements through the micro-cattle census. The chapter explains the mechanisms of bride price payments and the different marriage arrangements among the Nuer in Gambella. The Fifth Chapter presents data on actors involved in the raiding and counter-raiding practices along the borderlands between Ethiopia and South Sudan. The introduction of money and opening of cattle markets in Lari are also dealt with in detail. The issue of disarmament, cross-border arms flow are also presented in this chapter.

The Sixth Chapter presents discussion and analysis based on the data presented in the last two chapters. Correlations and linkages are made to draw lines along the dots. The data presented are discussed in line with the research question and objectives. This followed by a wrap-up of the thesis with summary and conclusion. As the last part of the thesis, the conclusion concludes the study by highlighting the major findings of the study.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review and Empirical Studies

### 2.1. Cattle-raiding

North-east Africa is one of the most violent regions in the world constituting 41 percent of the conflicts in 2006 (Ian and Teferi, 2012: 250). The type of conflict in this part of Africa often concerns the conflict between agriculturalist and pastoralists which is a dominant theme in the literature. Of course, this sort of conflict occurs along the Ethio-South Sudan border yet my focus is on a different sort of conflict which is a conflict between agro-pastoralists along the borders of Ethiopia and the newly born state of South Sudan.

Livestock rustling is an old practice among the cattle-rearing communities along the border between Ethiopia and Sudan. However, over the last three decades, it has transformed from being a customary means of livestock restocking where traditional weapon such as bows, arrows, and spears were used to a commercial practice where sophisticated weaponry is used. Raids are well planned and executed with military precision characterized by the use of modern and destructive weapons. Cattle raiders are known to use small arms and light weapons such as AK-47 to target communities.

Mburu (Mburu, 2002), explained that this has virtually transformed cattle rustling from a traditional practice to a highly organized crime. The primary element in these raids is that the cattle stolen are taken to urban centers where they are slaughtered and sold as beef. Only in rare cases, the cattle are used to restock a community whose resources got depleted. This new development has made cattle rustling a very profitable business, leading to its commercialization (Mburu, 2002).

In similar way, Hendrickson, Armon and Mearns (1998) in their analysis of livestock raiding among the pastoral communities of Kenya argue that the long-persisting and erroneous conception of famine among the pastoral communities in Kenya as an essentially drought-driven-event has given way to growing recognition today of the key role which livestock raiding plays in the breakdown of coping strategies.

The findings of Hendrickson, Armon and Mearns (1998) also indicate that the main actors in raids are male youth and younger men mostly below the age of 30. Based on these studies, three

types of livestock raids can be identified according to the number of participating riders. First, in highly organized 'mass raids', several hundred to even thousands of raiders attack a neighboring community. Second, in raids, several dozens and occasionally up to a few hundred raiders from nearby villages come together to raid one village or *kraal* of a rivaling community. The third type of raids is the smallest with mostly a handful to less than 15 participating raiders. The targets of the later raids are usually small, unprotected *kraals* or a group of animals which is only accompanied by one pastoralist or herd boy.

My argument here is that the phenomenon of cattle raids *per se* is not the problem. Rather my emphasis and line of argument is about the fashion in which raiding has been transformed over the years; from a cultural practice with important livelihood enhancing functions, into more predatory forms driven by an economic logic and modern forms of violence, which attributed to destruction of pastoral livelihoods and the environment, death and the breakdown of the social infrastructure just to mention a few.

The conflict along the border between Gambella region of Ethiopia and Jonglei state of South Sudan manifested in cattle-raiding. Cattle-raiding and counter-raiding is a cultural practice that has existed for centuries among pastoralist societies and it is an intrinsic feature of competition between groups in the arid areas of Northeast Africa (Hendrickson, 1998: 3). The main purpose of cattle-raiding as well described in the classic ethnographic literature (Fukuï and Turton, 1979; Sweet, 1969) was to replenish the herds lost due to famine, drought or major outbreaks of animal diseases. Others use the term reciprocal (Simala and Amutabi, 2005) as groups help each other in re-stocking the lost herds.

The bride wealth which is paid in cattle among the pastoralists has also a significant implication for raiding and counter-raiding. For those who considered raiding as an economic activity (Beswick, 2004), the larger the clan family, the more powerful it becomes. Beswick explained that the Dinka and the Nuer have been in a state of regular conflict with those on the peripheries as they try to acquire more territories (Beswick, 2004: 209). Besides, raiding is a practice for moral values like honor and prestige among men in the pastoralist communities.

Traditionally, raiding normally took place between tribes and it is not allowed within the family, lineage, clan or tribe. Moreover, it was done with the help of spears, sticks, and arrows which made it humane with fewer casualties (Hendrickson, 1998). In this type of raiding, the elders or traditional authorities gave blessing and traditional rules of engagement were respected. This is what was called 'redistributive' raiding (Hendrickson, 1998) which serves to replenish herds that are lost due to drought, raids and animal diseases.

Over the past four decades, cattle-raiding becomes a phenomenon of cross-national boundary mainly along the borders of Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Eriksen and Lind (2005) identified two types of raids in Karamoja cluster i.e. large inter-ethnic raids across national borders and small-scale raids by bandits. Both the frequency and intensity of raids in the region have increased in recent decades (Ian and Teferi, 2012: 250).

Warfare, raiding, and counter-raiding among pastoralists in North-east Africa goes back well into pre-colonial times (Greiner, 2013; Lamphear, 1998). Douglas H. Johnson (1982) attributed the reasons for cattle raiding before colonialism to the territorial expansion of pastoralist groups such as the Nuer. As Dereje (2011) and Mossa (2014) explained, the massive territorial expansion of the Nuer eastwards into Gambella in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was mainly the result of territorial expansion and cattle raiding from their powerful neighbors Murle and Dinka. Still today, Lou Nuer seasonally migrate towards the east where the Ethiopian Jikany Nuer inhabit.

The colonial governments in the Sudan and the imperial government in Ethiopia tried to inhibit warfare and territorial expansion along their common borders by controlling weapons flows. However, warfare continued in the lowland peripheries as each side tried to manipulate groups along with their borders. For instance, the Anuak got weapons from the highlands of Ethiopia to curb the Nuer expansion into their land (Markakis, 2011). In the same way, the Nuer on Ethiopian side were mobilized under SPLM/A with the support of the Derg regime.

After independence in the Sudan in 1956, followed was the longest civil war for half a century. Cattle-raiding regained importance and intensified with the absence of control mechanisms and the spread of modern firearms along the common border. The longest conflict in the region has destroyed the traditional authority of elders and led to the formation of various militia groups

along different ethnic lines. The availability of weapons also aggravated the situation which led to violent raiding in the 1970s (Fukui and Markakis, 1994).

Since then, various and different explanations have been offered to the persistence and dynamics of cattle-raiding in North-east Africa. This part of the thesis discusses general literature related to cattle raiding and situate them to a specific concern of the situations along the Ethio-South Sudan border. In so doing, the literature is reviewed in a thematic way. Four main thematic areas have been identified which are persistent in the discussion about cattle-raiding among East African herders.

## **2.2. Cultural/ecological analysis**

The classical ethnographic works on east African herders (Fukui and Turton 1979; Smith 1992) described cattle raiding as an activity meant to the benefit of the society as a whole. This ecological functionalism thesis was the most dominant analysis in the 1970s about warfare and raiding and counter-raiding among East African herders. The cultural or ecological analysis of raiding and counter-raiding mainly lies in the interconnected elements of these East African herders. In warfare and organized raiding, two social organizations and motivations are paramount i.e. the segmentary lineage, age organization, and motivation for cattle.

In his classic ethnographic works on The Nuer, Evans Pritchard deeply describes the segmentary lineage in which the members of each Nuer tribe saw themselves as descended from a common ancestor, various clans and other segments as comprising a single vast genealogy (Fleisher, 2000: 5). In times of conflict or raid, the various segments (which were opposed and hostile towards each other) form larger structure and alliances (Pritchard, 1940: 143).

Similarly, Eria in his study of the Karimojong of Northeastern Uganda described the social organization of the Karimojong in relation to cattle as:

*clusters of patrilineal groups, coming together in lineages and clans with relationships constructed around livestock, particularly cattle, which is used for both subsistence and payment of bride price. For a Karimojong man, if the social organization is to be regarded as a network of interpersonal relationships, then the significant sectors of it can be demarcated in terms of those persons with whom he has mutual or common interests in cattle, (Eria, 2010: 75).*

According to Evans-Pritchard (1940: 19), the Nuer raid cattle both to replace animals lost due to rinderpest and raids from other groups and for the payment of the bridewealth. Similarly, Kelly (1985) argued that the main reason for the Nuer expansion against the Dinka was driven by increased bridewealth requirement.

Similarly, age organization holds the important explanatory tool for the cultural or ecological analysis of cattle raiding in the classical ethnographic works on East African herders. According to Fleisher (2000: 5), age organization is an extremely important feature among East African herders because these societies capitalize on the value maintenance of manhood through an age-set system which is used as a means of maximizing inter-group identity and hence enhancing effectiveness in raiding.

Dyson-Hudson (cited in Fleisher, 2000: 5), described the features of the age-set organization as:

*it immediately allocates to any individual in a collection of persons, however transient, a niche in a universal ranking system. Every individual has, accordingly, a pattern of response already roughly created, and needing an only application to the context in which he finds himself.* (Dyson-Hudson cited in Fleisher, 2000: 5).

When it comes to motivation, the classic ethnographic works attributed the motivation for raiding to the desire for prestige, retaliation, loot, young girls, and trophies. Moreover, claims like victims in association with the death of favorite oxen and for the purposes of expanding herds and replenishing stock loses and bridewealth are considered the main motives behind raiding and counter-raiding (Fukui and Turton, 1979; Baxter, 1979).

Eria (2010: 85) stated that cattle constituted items of great social and economic interest for the Karimojong because the value attached to cattle provide motives for most of the decisions and actions they take. Their social and political behavior is also influenced by the value attached to cattle. He further noted that cattle in Karamojong is something more important and sacred than kind of capital commodity (Eria).

According to Olowo (2010: 85), in the context of Karimojong, raiding was traditionally managed since cattle was considered as a collective property. There were various ways of redistributive forms of raiding which helps to the stability of the pastoral system as a whole. Hendrickson

(cited in Eria, 2010: 103) explained that in the absence of any overarching authority in pastoral societies, raiding and counter-raiding serve to maintain the balance of power.

As argued by Sweet (1965) and Fukui and Turton (1979), the institutionalized forms of raiding of the time serve to redistribute livestock over a wide area by circulating livestock from where it was abundant to a place of scarce areas and thus sustaining a general balance of pastoralist economy. However, this earlier discussion of cattle-raiding and counter-raiding that focused on its presumed human-ecological function of redistribution and herd management has been challenged by empirical evidence since the early 1990s.

Fleisher (2000), Smith (1992) and others with their rich ethnographic data pointed out that the human ecological analysis simply does not address the supra-regional issues raised by the theft of cattle for sale in local and national as well as cross-border markets and the introduction of modern weapons in the traditional settings. Further, Eria (2010: 103) explained that the huge influx of automatic weapons in the last two decades has transformed the nature, intensity, and range of social relationships in Karimojong. He further indicated that "with the easy availability of markets, raided cattle are often quickly sold out of the region, thus impoverishing the communities and making them dependent upon the gun for their livelihood" (Eria, 2010: 105).

### **2.3. The Role of Modern Arms on Cattle Raiding**

Since the 1990s, studies on pastoralist communities have emphasized the changing nature of cattle raiding (see Hendrickson et.al, 1998). Since then researchers explained the changing nature of cattle-raiding pointing to the increased proliferation of automatic rifles such as the Ak-47. This is a perspective that argues the acquisition of automatic weapons and ammunition to have driven the violence in the pastoralist areas to a new dynamics.

Eria (2010: 33) explained about this phenomenon as the most potent ingredient fueling pastoral conflict in recent years in Karimojong with the influx of weapons from other conflicts in neighboring Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. He further explained that to survive the vagaries of drought and insecurity, the gun has been turned into a household item which is used to fuel cattle-raiding.

In his discussion of violence and social tensions among the Suri, Abbink (2007) showed the important role of automatic weapons in the Suri community and their relations with other communities across the border in the Sudan. He wrote that the Suri have had access to automatic rifles and ammunition since the 1980s which they got in the illicit trade for cattle. The Suri see the gun as an investment and "gun owners are awarded disproportionately large amounts from the booty of raided cattle (Abbink, 2007: 59 ).

Abbink further noted that guns are now highly visible and led their owner's power and status among peers which led to the fracturing of communities and the collapse of the age-based authority system.

*One might almost speak of a traditional society passing through the "postmodern" phase: Suri no longer have an overarching cultural narrative giving meaning to society as a cohesive whole, and they evince a loss of ideological elements founding the social order. In the absence of komorus [ritual leaders] and the elders of the "reigning" rorà [junior elders] generation being able to exercise restraint and leadership, it is only the peer group, kinship bonds and the inescapable duties resulting from lineage or clan membership that binds Suri. (Abbink, 2007: 67).*

Hutchinson (1996) explained the role of the gun in the Sudanese Nuer. After buying a gun (mainly exchange for cattle), the young men had to postpone marriage because of lack of enough cattle. Apparently, these young men are faced with dilemma because, as Bollig and Matthias (2007: 41), explained: "when the loot was distributed mainly those men who participated in the raid with a gun got the lion's share, while those who took part without a gun got only a few animals".

This is just similar to Abbink's explanation above that ownership of a gun is a value contributing disproportionately to the success of the raid. Both Abbink (2007) and Bollig and Matthias argued that guns do not function only as a means of production but also contribute to the prestige of young men.

Discussing the role of weapons in the social organization of the Pokot of Kenya, Bollig, and Matthias (2007: 41) explained that raiding with the help of automatic weapons help young men to win numerous head of livestock in a very short period of time, and they also gain prestige as

fierce and brave warriors. And in turn, this helps them to establish independent households early on and guaranteed them prominent treatment by the age mates and seniors.

Similarly, Eria (2010: 33) argued about the role of weapons in the socio-cultural dynamics of the Karimojong as:

*Disfigured the traditional normative order; breaking not only the critical customary restraints against unacceptable violence but also disentangled the social webs of livelihoods. Although low-intensity violence, above all revolving around cattle-raiding, has been an enduring value among the Karimojong, the influx of automatic weaponry and its use in facing off the state and other enemies in the last two decades has transformed its nature, intensified its human cost, and transformed a range of social relationships. (Eria, 2010: 33).*

The arming of one group will obviously lead to the arming of another neighboring group which led to competition between young men. Turton (1979) described this phenomenon in South-western Ethiopia. He explained that the balance of power among the various pastoralist groups in Southern Ethiopia was altered when the Nyangatom managed to get weapons on a large scale in the 1980s by forming an alliance with the Toposa of the Sudan who were highly armed by the Sudanese government.

Since the 1980s, guns have been discussed as a new means of production by looking at the potential gains from raiding backed by automatic weapons. Automatic weapons are considered as change agents in the transformation of pastoral societies in Northeast Africa. Gray et al (2003: 19) clearly explained that the AK-47 raids present the single greatest risk to the persistence of the pastoralist system and the pastoralist themselves.

#### **2.4. Climate change and environmental security**

More recently, issues around climate change and environmental security have begun shaping the debate on cattle-raiding and counter-raiding in pastoralist areas. This explanation finds its origin in Malthus who argued that scarcity occurs when the population growth at rates that outstrip any growth of resources and that eventually, the population will decline as a result of famine and wars (Vreugdenhil, 2012: 32).

The neo-Malthusians who built their analysis on the theory of Malthus focuses on the consequences of scarcity on the environment instead of merely on people. The neo-Malthusians

considered culture as a threat to nature and hence it is the environment that should be protected from destructive human exploitation which could lead to degradation and famine and finally conflicts. This explanation could be broken down into climate change, resource scarcity, and political ecology.

Climate change is an obvious attraction given the fact that water resources and availability of pasture are largely dependent on the climate and rainy season. Even though it is unclear how the rainfall patterns will change in the future, despite a change in the rainfall patterns, what seems clear is the fact that a warming climate will have a negative impact on water sources. The impacts of climate change are crop failure, drought, sea-level changes, river basin degradation, conflicts over fishing resources (as fishing diminishes due to rising temperature), migration related to climate (could increase the risk of political instability and conflict) etc. Reduced water availability may induce conflict between different users (herders and farmers for example) (Vreugdenhil, 2012: 32).

The debate on resource scarcity showed that there are many forms of it. Lee (2009: 5-8) identifies four types of scarcity. The first one is what he called physical scarcity which is a limitation on the availability of finite resources. The second one, geographical scarcity is about the distribution of resources among countries and this includes both finite and renewable resources. The socio-economic scarcity is the third one which Lee described it as the unequal distribution of the various socio-economic variable in various societies. The fourth one is the degree of availability of renewable resources which he named it as environmental scarcity.

Rather than the mere abundant or scarcity of resources, the deprivation of resources of one group by another is mentioned as causes of conflict in pastoralist areas (Gausset and Whyte, 2005). That is to say, even though certain resources might be abundant, it can be scarce to a certain group because of access to it. This led to a discussion on the political ecology theory which argues that scarcity is determined not only by the availability of the natural resources as such but also by the socioeconomic and political context that shapes the type and amount of access.

Gausset and whyte (2005), remind us even though conflicts might be framed in terms of access to natural resources and climate change and environmental degradation, it must be noted that

their cause is socio-political. The political ecology perspective approaches scarcity in a different way i.e. political, social, economic and cultural.

The political ecology paradigm evolved as a critique against the aforementioned rather apolitical theory of resource scarcity perceiving conflict as a result of environmental degradation and resource scarcity. By combining ecological analysis with that of political economy with a focus on the use and management of natural resources at the local level, political ecology paradigm is the main perspective in recent times in human environmental research.

While some see population pressure, climate change and resource scarcity as fundamental triggers of violence in the pastoralist areas, many empirically based studies have rejected this Malthusian notion (see Butler and Gates, 2012) claiming that institutions and political calculations are important in the new form of violent cattle-raiding in the pastoralist areas.

## **2.5. The "new" type of cattle-raiding**

Today's cattle-raiding is so far from what has been described as 'redistributive' in the 1970s. What we read today in the literature is 'illicit', 'commercial' and 'predatory' raiding (Fleischer, 2002; Wheeler, 2009). These new terminologies are to explain the type of raiding driven by the desire to increase one's stock at the expense of the neighbor and more for commercial reasons. The practice of raiding and counter-raiding changed over the years and become more individualized and commercialized with the coming of new actors other than pastoralists and availability of automatic rifles.

Molosiwa explained the changing practice of cattle-raiding in Botswana as:

*Cattle raiding already underwent a process of transformation during the colonial period in Botswana as colonial policy turned the traditional practice of cattle raiding into that of commercial theft and cash-oriented smuggling. Pastoralists in Botswana started to perceive their cattle as a 'marketable commodity'. The breakdown of traditional law enforcement mechanisms by the colonial rulers also contributed to this transformation. (Molosiwa cited in Vreugdenhil, 2012: 30).*

Hendrickson et. al (1998: 10) similarly argued for Kenya:

*The colonial policies in Kenya prevented the pastoralists from pursuing their productive activities and also aggravated the raiding of cattle as the state got*

*greater control over pastoral affairs. As a result of the state having more control, the authority of the elders diminished.* (Hendrickson et al, 1998:10).

Besides explaining this new form of raiding as facilitated by the introduction and availability of automatic weapons, shrinking resource base is also a prominent one as a result of recurrent drought and the introduction of commercial agriculture and changing consumption patterns (Markakis, 2004). Markakis further explained that the current violent conflict in the pastoralist area has also been influenced by the bigger conflict in the Horn of Africa where pastoralists seek alliances across the border for weapons and resources (Markakis, 2004: 23). The case of the longest Sudanese civil war is an illustration in which the Sudanese government armed various tribal groups in its fight against SPLM/A.

Many literature attribute the changing pattern of raiding from 'redistributive' to 'predatory' one to the increased availability of automatic weapons and recurrent drought in the region. However, Hendrickson et al (1998: 10) clearly indicated that the transformation is caused by the involvement of non-pastoral actors (such as traders and militias) in the practice of raiding and thereby undermining the pastoral livelihoods as well as the socio-economic integrity of the pastoral system (Vreugdenhil, 2012: 31).

When it comes to the consequences of this type of raiding among the pastoralist communities it is devastating both in human and material losses. Explaining the connection between famine and cattle-raiding in Tanzania, McCabe (cited in Vreugdenhil, 2012: 31) argues that drought is erroneously often blamed to cause famine as drought is politically neutral despite the fact that raiding is more devastating than droughts.

Moreover, the breakdown of the moral economy as a consequence of this new form of raiding is also explained by Hendrickson and others. Hendrickson et al (1998) argued that moral practices that pastoralists depend on in times of crisis such as borrowing cereal and cattle in time of drought are breaking down and livestock and people are tended to be clustered together for protection in times of insecurity which in return makes them vulnerable when they got raided and then after nothing is left to turn to each other.

Alemmaya and Tobias (2008) in their important ethnographic work on cattle raiding among the Karrayu acknowledge that Cattle raiding is a widespread and long standing form of violence among many Ethiopian pastoral communities. In contrast to neighboring Kenya where the existence of British colonial records makes it possible to reconstruct historic violent incidents, past cattle raids among Ethiopian herding groups have gone largely undocumented.

In their article, they showed contrasting moral conceptions of the Karrayu and the Ethiopian state with regard to cattle raiding and their strategies to deal with the legacy of raids, namely efforts to retrace stolen animals, identify wrongdoers and pacify intergroup relations. They argue that, similar to other Ethiopian pastoral groups, the availability of guns are a serious concern in the raiding of cattle. And the militarization of pastoralists is partly the result of successive regimes' inability to provide security and to uphold a monopoly of violence in its semi-arid hinterlands.

Generally, the specific narratives in one part of the world might not be explained by models developed somewhere far from these areas. The situation along the Ethiopian and South Sudan borderlands have a unique history and feature that demands its explanations. For that, this study will rely on the emic perspectives of the local people and situate them in the broader discussion about cattle-raiding among the East African herders.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Methods of Data Collection**

In this chapter, I present the methodology and the methods of data collection used to analyze the data in the next chapters. The chapter is organized under the following sub-sections. The relevance of ethnographic methodology in the analysis of cattle-raiding; ethnographic setting and site selection; sampling techniques; selection of informants; in-depth personal interviews; short interviews with government officials and micro-cattle census and payment of bride price and its correlation with herd size. Collection of government reports and finally reflections on the methodology are also included.

### **3.1. The Relevance of Ethnographic Methodology in the Analysis of Cattle-raiding**

My thesis is a qualitative study intended for documenting the daily practice of cattle-raiding among the communities along the Ethio-South Sudan borderlands. Explaining the changing faces of cattle-raiding requires one to go to each household affected by this practice and to talk to them what they feel and how they see it in their daily life. Therefore, my study relies on the ethnographic methodology.

Whitehead (2004: 4) argues that while the qualitative method is the predominant paradigm of ethnography, ethnography is more than simply a qualitative research method. This is because, ethnographers use a range of methods such as carrying out fieldwork, living in communities of their hosts, recording field notes and observations, participating in activities during observations (participant observation), and carrying out various forms of ethnographic interviewing (like micro-census). Besides, methods such as physical mapping of the study setting, conducting household censuses and genealogies, assessing network ties, and using photography and other audio/visual methods helps to avoid being a prison to the artificial boundaries of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Ethnography is interested in the socio-cultural contexts and processes in which people live their lives, as well as the meaning's systems which motivate them. Within an ethnographic paradigm, the actors and their corresponding actions, behaviors, and beliefs are examined within the cultural and societal context in which they take place. As discussed by Clifford (1986: 2):

*Ethnography is actually situated between powerful systems of meaning. It poses its questions at the boundaries of civilizations, cultures, classes, races, and genders. Ethnography decodes and recodes, tilling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion, and exclusion. It describes processes of innovation and structuration and is itself part of these processes.* (Clifford, 1986: 2).

In summary, Agar (1996: 11) suggested that an ethnographer must go:

*Beyond a focus on local communities and should situate them within the larger political economy, as people are part of states and of a turbulent world. Such social context brings multiple systems of meanings, some more dominant than others in affecting the lives of people at the local level.* (Agar, 1996: 11).

The aim of ethnography is to understand the social contexts, processes, and meanings of a cultural system from the perspective of the members of that system. Whitehead (2004: 16) explained that the ethnographer should maintain both an "emic" and an "etic" approach to studying any given cultural system. He further explained what is meant by emic and etic views. An emic approach attempts to understand components of a cultural system from the perspective of the group being studied. The etic approach, on the other hand, analyzes a cultural system with research paradigms brought by the researcher from outside of that system (Whitehead, 2004: 16). Complementing the emic with an etic viewpoint is important for understanding all aspects of a human group. Malinowski (cited in Whitehead, 2004: 16) indicated the goal of ethnography as "to grasp the native's point of view...to realize his vision of the world".

Three phases of fieldwork were conducted. The first one was from 9-27 August 2015 for three weeks which was a preliminary fieldwork that helped me to familiarize myself with the area and to select the appropriate sites for further ethnographic studies. In this first phase, mapping of sites for further fieldwork and some interviews and household surveys were conducted.

The first proposal was, of course, to conduct fieldwork in Akobo *Woreda*. Yet the current armed conflict between the South Sudanese government and SPLM-IO in Jonglei state of South Sudan, which is close to Akobo, prevented me to go there. Moreover, my informants and Lari security and militia district office told me that it is almost impossible to go to Akobo this time and I also heard that Akobo *Woreda* administrator himself took refuge in Gambella city due to the violent circumstance in and around the border. Thus, the actual circumstances at the ground forced me to

look for another alternative site: Lari *Woreda*, Pagak *Kebele*. So the first visit was done in Pagak which is further east. In Pagak, interviews with elders and household heads were conducted in this phase. This phase was also helpful to see actual settings and to look back at the proposal to rearrange matters to set on for the second phase.

The second phase of fieldwork was conducted from April 2- May 30, 2016, in Pagak and was much longer than the first one. Household surveys and micro-cattle census were conducted in full scale and in-depth interviews were also done. Short interviews with Lari *Woreda* officials and Regional government officials in Gambella were also conducted in this phase. Moreover, secondary sources and government reports were consulted and data obtained in Gambella in this phase of the fieldwork.

The third and wrap-up phase of the field work was demanded due to major developments in my field site on April 15, 2016. Early morning Friday, April 15, 2016, more than 3,000 armed groups from South Sudan burned down thirteen villages of which five villages were in Lari. The deadly raid left 208 people dead, including mothers and children, in addition to 80 casualties, 102 children abducted and over 2,000 cattle stolen on the day. This attack is unique and never happened before on such a scale. I was on my last days of second phase field work in Gambella at the time. As the situation was so tense I had to leave Gambella.

I got back to Gambella between August 21-30, 2017 to understand what actually happened on that day which I incorporated as a subsection in Chapter Five of the study. Due to the violence then after, all residents of Pagak *Kebele* have been moved to the nearest village called Bulimkun.

### **3.2. The Ethnographic Setting and Site Description**

The central focuses of this study are Gambella Region of Ethiopia that shares a long but porous border with Jonglei State of South Sudan, found in southwestern part of Ethiopia and north-eastern part of South Sudan respectively. Of course, Gambella Region of Ethiopia also has a boundary with Upper Nile State. Gambella and Jonglei share a long border and the ethnic groups living along this border have long-hostile relations dominated by cattle-raiding and counter-raiding and hence a focus for my study.

The main research site is on the Ethiopian side of the border and the data from Jonglei State mainly comes from police reports in Gambella and interviews from abducted children now returned by Ethiopian authorities, captives of cattle-raiding brought in Gambella city by the Ethiopian military forces and people who have knowledge about Murle.

The actual fieldwork is conducted only in Gambella region of Ethiopia, particularly in Lari *Woreda*, Pagak *Kebele*. The same security concerns prevented me to travel to Akobo *Woreda* since the SPLM-IO forces were operating in the area and the area was a highly militarized zone while I was on the field in September 2015 and later in April 2016.

Gambella is located in Southwestern frontier of Ethiopia. It is 766km far from the center, and one of the most remote parts of Ethiopian lowlands. Gambella is crossed by several large rivers that flow into the Sobat River in South Sudan and hence to White Nile. Rivers like Baro, Akobo, Gilo, and Alwero are natural borders between Gambella and Jonglei State of South Sudan and major natural resource for their livelihood and transpiration. Gambella covers a total land size of 25,274 km<sup>2</sup>. It borders Oromia Regional state in the East, and SNNPRS in the South east. Jonglei and Upper Nile State of South Sudan are its most Western frontiers borders (Mossa, 2014).



Map 1. Gambella Regional State and Jonglei State



Map 2; Lari *Woreda*, Gambella Peoples Regional State



The redrawing of the regional boundaries in Ethiopia in the early 1990s produces a separate Gambella Region for the lowland people of Anywaa, Nuer, Majang, Opo, and Komo. Since 1995, Gambella's administrative structure was redrawn and three zones<sup>5</sup> were created. Anywaa Zone constitutes five Anywaa inhabited *Woredas*<sup>6</sup> along the Baro and Akobo Rivers. Abobo, Gog, Jor, Gambella Zuriya, and Dimma *Woredas* belong to the Anywaa. Similarly, the Nuer Zone has five *Woredas*; Akobo, Jigaw, Makaye, Wanthwa, and Lari. The third Zone is for Majang and it has two *Woredas*: Godere and Mengesh. And one special wored for both Anywaa and Nuer is Tiyang

According to the 2007 census, the population of Gambella is 307,000. This figure makes it the second smallest Regional State after Harar and one of Ethiopia's multi-ethnic regional state, comprising major "indigenous" ethnic groups; Anywaa and Nuer and three minor groups – Majang, Opo, and Komo. Beside these indigenous ethnic groups, Gambella also comprises a sizable immigrant community, although not few of them were born and brought up there and these are commonly known as "highlanders".

The Nuer belong to the nation who lived in today's South Sudan. According to E. Pritchard (1940: 129) and Markakis (2011: 80), the recent history of the Eastern Nuer is one of steady expansion Eastward in the Gambella plain, where the abundance of pastureland and permanent water sources are an obvious attraction. The longest civil war in the Sudan contributed for a huge influx of the Nuer into Gambella. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Nuer in Gambella reached 148,000 (CSA, 2007). There are four sections of Eastern Jikany Nuer or Gaatkiir. These are Thiang, Gajaak, Gaguang and Gajiok. In this regard, these four sections of Eastern Jikany Nuer or Gaatkiir live in both countries. The Eastern Jikany Nuer (Gaatkiir) continue to occupy the lands on Ethiopia and South Sudan sides of the Pibor and Gilo rivers in the southwest of Gambella region and the Baro river in the northwest of the region. These rivers mark the international boundary between South Sudan and Ethiopia.

On the South Sudan side, Jonglei State is found in Southeastern part of the country which is the largest state of South Sudan, comprising 122,581 km<sup>2</sup>. It has 1,358,602 inhabitants (which is

<sup>5</sup>Zone is the administrative level between the regional at the highest and the *Woreda* at the lower levels of administration

<sup>6</sup>This is the administrative level between Zone and *Kebele*; *Kebele* being the lowest level.

16.4 % of the entire population of South Sudan)<sup>7</sup> and consists of eleven counties. At the same time, it is also the most underdeveloped state of South Sudan. Jonglei state is inhabited by several groups, and the major ones are the Nuer and the Dinka. The Dinka are the largest and most dominant groups of South Sudan as a whole. In addition, some smaller groups like the Murle and Anywaa have Jonglei state as their home. The research area selected for this study was Pibor County which is inhabited by Murle.

Compared to the Dinka, the Lou Nuer cultivates less as the environmental circumstances do not allow for a lot of agriculture. On the other hand, the Murle do not cultivate. The Dinka and Nuer have a lot in common, but it is argued that the Nuer used to have the reputation of being warriors and had greater willingness to fight and raid than the Dinka, their neighbors (Meeker, 1989: 68). Southall (in Meeker, 1989) even argues that the terms 'Dinka' and 'Nuer' are somewhat synonymous for 'raided' and 'raider' instead of finding its origin in ethnicity (Meeker, 1989: 70). Also, Evans-Pritchard noted that the Nuer are prone to fighting (Evans-Pritchard, 1940:151).

The Nuer are divided by the international border between Ethiopia and South Sudan. The Nuer living on the Jonglei side are Lou Nuer, and the Jikany Nuer are inhabiting the Gambella region of Ethiopia. These Nuer clans have a long history of hostile relations caused by competition over water points and pasture as well as raiding and counter-raiding.

As it has come clear from interviews with household informants in Pagak and Lari *Woreda* Security officers, the Murle are also very much involved and often blamed for the raiding and abduction of communities in Gambella. The Murle are a group from Pibor County in Jonglei state. Just as the Nuer, they mainly depend on cattle for their livelihoods as they only cultivate by necessity (Lewis, 1972: 31). Murle's name is very much associated with child abduction and cattle-raiding in Lari. In addition to cattle, they are known for abducting children whom they keep themselves or trade within their communities. The Murle can be compared with the Turkana in northern Uganda who also has a reputation for being fearless warriors, and even the police are afraid to stop them (Thomas, 1965:118). Murle is expert night-fighters, and in the past, due to their methods, they have been able to capture considerable numbers of cattle from their Nilotic neighbors (Lewis, 1972: 89).

---

<sup>7</sup> Statistical Yearbook of Southern Sudan, 2010 (based on the 2008 census).

Lari *Woreda* which is 70Km far from Gambella City and 60km from Akobo is a border town between Ethiopia and South Sudan, and it is one of the Nuer inhabited *Woredas* in Gambella Regional state. A total of 15,347 people inhabited Lari *Woreda* and it is constituted by 15 *Kebeles*. Pagak is one of the *Kebeles* north of Lari Town and it is constituting 311 households and a total of 1,327 population. Lari is also home for the Tiang Nuer clan of the Jikany Nuer. Since the early 1990s, Lari and the surrounding area have experienced serious raiding by Lou Nuer and Murle just across the border from Jonglei.

### 3.3. Sampling Techniques

Unlike classic ethnographic studies where ethnographers study small groups, often in remote villages, the modern ethnographic study involves the study of large groups scattered over a number of sites. In such cases, studying every single number of population is not possible and hence ethnographers must engage in sampling.

Schensul et.al (1991: 321) defines sampling as "a process of identifying from a large population a smaller group which not only shares the former's characteristics but is more manageable to study". He further explained that researchers use a number of strategies to choose samples from larger populations given the fact that the objective of sampling is to generate a small group that represents as accurately as possible the characteristics of the study population.

Regarding strategies for sampling, Russell (2006: 146), explains that sampling strategies in social sciences depend on the type of data sought i.e. individual attribute data or cultural data. These two aspects require different approaches to sampling. According to Russel (2006: 146), individual data are attributes of individuals in a population. For example, each person has an age, an income; and each person has preferences for things like characteristics of a mate. So if the idea is to estimate the average age, or income, or preference in a population, then Russell (2006: 147) advised having a scientifically drawn, unbiased sample. On the other hand, if a researcher is looking for cultural data i.e. shared cultural facts, he/she needs experts i.e. expert informants. My aim is to understand the dynamics of cattle raiding in the village and hence I look for people who can offer expert explanations about the cultural norm and variations on that norm.

Purposive, judgment sampling as Russell (2006: 187) called it, is one of the sampling methods in which researchers rely on their judgment to find informants that reflects the things they are interested in. Purposive sampling techniques involve selecting certain units or cases based on a specific purpose rather than randomly selecting. It is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study.

I used purposive sampling in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the case. According to (Trochim, 2006: 7), purposive sampling is a situation when the researcher chooses the sample based on who they think would be appropriate for the study. In purposive sampling, we sample with a purpose in mind in which case the researcher usually would have one or more specific predefined groups they are seeking.

### **3.3.1. Selection of Informants**

Selection is an important aspect in sampling strategies. Selection of representatives is a conceptually or theoretically informed process by which researchers become interested in studying a particular issue or group of people and then go about establishing a set of criteria for identifying and bounding that issue or group for an actual research project. Three sets of respondents were selected for specific data collection methods i.e. for an in-depth personal interview; for short interview with government officials and for the micro-cattle census.

### **3.3.2. In-depth Personal Interviews**

Informants for in-depth interviews were purposefully selected. Pagak *Kebele* is one of the biggest *Kebeles* in Lari *Woreda*. The *Kebele* has 311 households with a total population of 1,327. The *Kebele* administration has a list of male and female households and the number of people in each household which makes it easy to select informants for in-depth interviews. As the list indicated, there are more male households. There are only 62 female households. An attempt was made to select roughly equal male and female informants. Sometimes replacement of the previously selected informant was demanded because of the violence incidence in April 2016. Some of the selected informants were in mourning and have to be replaced by another.

Different selecting criteria were used to select informants. Male and female households, victims of cattle-raiding and child abduction and security concerns were considered in selecting informants. Households which are a victim of the recent raiding and close to the *Kebele* center are targeted. Given the fact that security is the main concern, households located in a far distance from the *Kebele* administration are excluded.

Moreover, people who have direct experience with raiding and abduction were selected for an in-depth personal interview. I rely on a snowball sampling which is another form of non-probability sampling that researchers use when the members of a population are difficult to locate. A snowball sample is one in which the researcher collects data on the few members of the target population he or she can locate, then asks those individuals to provide information needed to locate other members of that population whom they know.

Snowball selection of informants was vital to reach individuals who were abducted by the Murle and returned after sometimes. And people who have direct experience of raiding were also interviewed. For example, I ask informants to locate me the homestead of another informant who had been abducted or victims of the recent cattle-raiding. Through this methods, it was possible to reach people who had been abducted and returned by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces.

A total of 41 in-depth personal interviews were conducted in the three phases of the fieldwork. The interviews were conducted at two different sites. One is in Pagak *Kebele* and the other is in Lari Town. A total of 22 in-depth interviews were conducted in Pagak. Pagak is one of the *Kebeles* in Lari *Woreda* and has been selected to conduct in-depth interviews and micro-cattle census. It is one of the *Kebeles* in a remote setting and has experienced repeated attacks by Lou-Nuer and Murle. Personal narratives about cattle-raiding and child abduction with the people who faced it daily were collected using unstructured in-depth interviews. Household heads, elders, village heads, housewives, elementary school teacher, militia, farmer, cattle keeper and *Kebele* administrator were interviewed. It was also an ideal place to conduct a micro-cattle census. Having small homesteads and homesteads closer to each other makes it easy to conduct a micro-cattle census to know the changes in bride-price payments over time (see section 3.3.5).

Lari Town is the seats of the *Woreda* administration. *Woreda* government offices and schools are located here. Government offices like militia office and *Woreda* administrator who have a direct relation to cattle theft, raiding, and security matters are located here. Lari Town was also important to meet teachers and government employees who give elaborated explanations about cattle-raiding and child abduction. In-depth interview was conducted with teachers, police officers and NGOs workers in Lari. A total of 11 in-depth interviews were conducted in Lari Town.

#### **3.3.4. Short Interviews with Government Officials**

Besides the personal narratives about cattle-raiding and child abduction, short interviews with government officials were conducted to have institutional narratives about the issue. The short interview is prepared for government officials at the *Woreda* level in Lari and Regional Security and administrative affairs bureau in Gambella city. In Lari, a short interview was conducted with *Woreda* deputy administrator, militia office, and *Woreda* police officers. These are *Woreda* level government offices that have direct relations with the security of the *Woreda*.

At the regional level in Gambella city, the main office responsible for the security of the region is the Regional Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau. Incidences in different borderlands are reported to this office and they are responsible for making contacts and exchanging information with Jonglei State of South Sudan. Moreover, reports of incidences are also deposited at this office. So interviews with the Deputy Bureau Chief was sought to know about the actors, their motives, cross-border cooperation and reports of incidences of cattle-raiding and child abduction.

#### **3.3.5. Micro-Cattle Census**

From the in-depth personal interview with sampled homestead heads, it came out that there is a huge decline of the cattle herd. Even though there is a general agreement among my informants that there is a serious decline of cattle population since the 1980s, no one knows how many cattle were there in Pagak or in Lari in general.

And I found it inappropriate to ask my informants about the number of cattle they have. Here in Lari, the Nuer does not like the question how many cattle do you have? People here associate

bad luck and incidence with the counting of cattle. This could be like asking someone about his/her bank account in an urban setting. This was how the idea of conducting micro-cattle census came. Understanding bride wealth paid and fetched to a single household over a period of time might indicate the changing number of bride wealth. Through a micro-cattle census, it was possible to see the decline of bride wealth fetched and paid for almost a period of 20 years.

### **3.3.6. Payment of Bride wealth and Its correlation with Herd size**

Looking at bride wealth payments over time could explain the decline of cattle population. It is not controversial that the decline of cattle population is witnessed through changing patterns of average bride wealth fetched and paid among the Thiang Nuer clan in Lari over the course of time. It's possible to draw a correlation that bride wealth falls as cattle population falls.

In Pagak *Kebele*, which comprises 311 households (1,327 population), the magnitude of the decline of cattle population can be roughly quantified through a micro-cattle census which I was able to complete in the second round of field visit. Fifty-one households were purposively selected to conduct the micro-cattle census. The same purposive sampling is used. In this case, attempts were made to get both male and female household heads. Besides, older and newer marriages were also considered in selecting informants for the micro-census. Moreover, availability of household heads, the distance of the household and old and new marriages were the criteria used to select the households for the census. Marriages between 1996 and 2015 were selected; 1996 is the oldest and 2015 the recent. A total of 106 marriages were obtained in the census between the time intervals.

In the micro-census, informant were required to give information about the homestead head's wife(s), the year of marriage and cattle paid for and then to the homestead heads first son and when he married and how many cattle were paid for, this continues until the last son marriage. And subsequently, the homesteaded head first daughter when she was married and how many cattle were fetched for the bride wealth. This also continues until the last daughter's marriage. This resulted in a lot of name marriage year and bride wealth which will help to sees the changes in a bride wealth and the cattle population.

### **3.4. Government Reports And Analysis of Document**

Reports of incidences of cattle-raiding and child abduction were used to collect data about the specific date of incidences and the number of people abducted and the number of cattle looted in that particular incidence. Some of the reports are available in Lari *Woreda*. However, there is no culture of reporting every incidence in the *Woreda*. Moreover, the *Woreda* report only cases that have resulted in massive casualties.

The Gambella Regional Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau is the main responsible office to document reports and re-report them to the Federal Government at Addis Ababa. However, the Bureau has scantily documented reports of incidences of cattle-raiding and child-abduction. The problem is lack of organized report management and accessibility. The local security officers report only cases that are serious and there is no culture of reporting every incidence.

### **3.5. Reflections on the Methodology: Challenges and Limitations**

The language barrier is always an issue when doing research in a place different from a researcher's. The language spoken in the research area mainly among households is Nuer, in which case the interviews were conducted by means of a translator. Obviously, the use of translators does affect the results and outcomes of the interviews as misunderstandings are easy. The researcher used local primary school teachers who speak both Nuer and Amharic to have better chance to get a clear view. The researcher made use of triangulation of interviews and cross-checking of it and tried to probe as much as possible to avoid misunderstanding. When it comes to urban settings and government offices, informants in these areas have better knowledge of Amharic, and it was possible to avoid misunderstanding that arises from language barriers.

Regarding security, Gambella is one of the most insecure parts of the country and it becomes more insecure for 'light-skinned highlanders' who are considered as agents of government by some armed groups who have hostile relations with the central government. I had to rely on my research assistant who knows the area very well and helped as guider as well. In addition, the researcher always tries to have information about the area before traveling. Moreover, areas close to the border where the fight is going on between the South Sudanese government and SPLA-IO forces which are stationed along the Ethiopian border are more insecure, and I avoided

these areas. The memories of the violent raids on the 15th April 2016 by armed groups along the border were still fresh in Lari. I was lucky to avoid any problem on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. I was in Gambella city for interviews with Akobo *Woreda* administrator who took refuge in Gambella because of security in Akobo.

Also logistically, transportation has been the main challenge to travel from Gambella to Lari and from Lari to Pagak. There has not been regular transportation from Gambella to Lari and I had to get a ride from truck drivers and NGO cars. There was no public transport from Lari to Pagak and the only transport is NGO cars working in the area. I could not always go to every village I selected in the first place and available transportation was limited. Also, some homesteads were just too far to reach. In addition to that was the rainy season in August that made some roads very difficult to access. Also due to lack of communication infrastructure, it was very challenging to arrange appointments. So I should admit that security has strained the possibility of interviewing people around the border area who experience cattle-raiding and child abduction in their daily life.

## Chapter Four: Diminishing Herds, Bride wealth, and Cattle-Raiding

### 4.1. Introduction

In Pagak *Kebele*, every household has cattle, Regardless of the size herd. So my first question to my informants was why cattle are important and why they pursue more cattle. The answer is quite fascinating. There was no one to tell me reasons other than *Ciek* (wife) and *Kuen*



A Nuer cattle on the main road from Lari to Gambella near Riek village, December 2015. Photo by Roza Asrar

(marriage) i.e. *Hok*<sup>8</sup>(cattle) to get married to first wife and additional wives. My expectation of the role of cattle for dispute settlement (in the form of ritual), for compensation, for food (meat and blood consumption) and milk are secondary concerns to my informants. So marriage and women appear to be the most important entry points for

the researcher to see the cattle-raiding phenomenon in Lari *Woreda*. This section with starts data presentation with bride wealth and marriage. The other two sub-sections present data about the diminishing herds and decline of bride wealth and and cattle raiding.

### 4.2. Bride wealth and Marriage

The Nuer and Murle are pastoralist people whose lives are built around cattle. The social importance of cattle among the Nuer<sup>9</sup> is expressed in many ways. People are named after the favorite bull and they are also named after the bull slaughtered when they were born. For instance, names like Tuut (bull) and Thak (ox) are common among Nuer male in Lari and

<sup>8</sup> Hok in Nuer language is cattle in plural form and the singular form is Yong.

<sup>9</sup> The discussion here is about the role of cattle in Nuer community in Lari. I did not travel to Murle areas and thus most of the information about Murle is recorded from former abducted children now returned and among Nuer informants who had experience in abduction or raiding with the Murle.

Gambella. When they become young and ready to marry, cattle are indispensable for that social institution.

*Kuen* (marriage) is an important social institution among the Nuer. As mentioned in the introduction of the chapter, questions regarding the importance of cattle are correspondingly answered with wife and marriage. Among the Nuer, marriage is legitimized by the payment of the bride wealth. It is important to see the central position of cattle in marriage as social institutions and how these are interrelated. It is possible to draw a connection between the need for bride wealth and the practice of cattle-raiding in the area.

When it comes to marriage and related material exchanges, people use different terminologies such as bride prices, bridewealth, and dowry and gift exchanges. The usages of these terms have their own social meaning and explain how women are considered in that social structure. For instance, bride price is to refer to the various gifts a future bridegroom and his family gives to the family of his future wife. In contrast, dowry is a term that refers to the payment made by the future wife and her family to the future husband. Bridewealth is somewhat gesture of appreciation to a kin of the bride and its main manifestation is wealth transfer and its main intention is to create a strong social relationship. Gift exchange, on the other hand, refers to the contribution made by the family of the future wife and husband. In this case, both families offer gifts to one another as a form of consent to the future social relationship.

My informants in Gambella used the Nuer term *Hokuen* which is a combination of two terms. *Hok* is a term that refers to cattle in plural and *Kuen* is a term to refer to debts or payments made to others. The combined term *Hokuen* stands for payments made for others and in this case for the wife's family which is related to the bride wealth payment arrangements explained in the above paragraph. In my discussion with informants, it is understandable that they consider a number of cattle they give to the family of the future wife as a price for giving her in return. And it is only the family of the groom that contributes cattle for the marriage.

Deng Tut Bulimkun a village leader stated:

*You buy Afanngge [local spicy food for breakfast] with your Birr; we bought our wives with Hok. Here in Gambella, we buy wives with Hok which are different from Dega [highland parts of Ethiopia]. How much money did your husband give for your family? (Deng Tut, Bulimkun Village Leader, age 57, Lari: 23/04/16).*

Nyahok Pal, a housewife with seven children, explained:

*You are not poor if you have more girls than boys. Small girls are so helpful in the house. They help me in cooking, fetching water and taking care of the cattle. They are also wealth when they grow up. We will receive cattle, as a compensation for our loss of her role in the household, when someone comes to marry one of them. (Nyahok Pal, Housewife, age 53, Pagak: 05/04/2016).*

The rationale for bride wealth payment arrangements for my informants is because the family of the future wife has to be compensated for their loss of a girl. Losing a girl is highly related to losing not only the working labor and family membership of a girl but rather the wealth owned by girls because of being women. Women are imagined as a family asset that every young and older brothers relay for their future social responsibility in the form of marriages. This is a bride price that calculates to one family and compensates materially through payment of cattle. So am using both bride price and bride wealth interchangeable

When it comes to the purpose of the bride wealth, the response of the informants could be summed up in three ways. As Nyahok Pal, a housewife with nine children cited above indicated the first purpose of bride price payment is compensation for the girl's family. Dolek Tang, an elder with an eleven-year-old daughter, stated: *"Why I produce and take care of my daughter if I am not going to be benefited when she leaves my house?" (Delek Tang, elder, age 71, Pagak: 03/04/16).*

The bride price is supposed to compensate the family of the bride for the would-be services they would get from her. And it is considered as a compensation for all costs the parents had to make to feed and educate her. My informant, Nyadout Chot, a housewife with four children, associated bride prices as a compensation for the female labor and pain the women had to bear when giving birth (Nyadout Chot, housewife, age 36, Pagak: 11/04/16).

Daughters are considered future investments among the Nuer of Gambella. That is because, when she is given for marriage, the family will receive a handful of cattle which could be used by her brothers to marry. I can say that the community as a whole is in a cycle of debt to each other because of the bride price arrangements. A family needs to have a daughter so that she can bring cattle as a form of a loan to the family. These cattle will also be transferred to another family when her



A young debited girl for 23 cattle for her older brother's marriage, Pagak, August 2015. Photo by Roza Asrar

brothers are set to marry. These circular debts are functional in the form of social bond which unites not only the two families but the total community as a whole. This is the second purpose of the bride price which legitimizes marriage as a social debt.

The third purpose of the bride price is about *Puth Kuen* i.e. blessing of marriages. For the marriage to be blessed in the presence and blessing of Nuer elders, cattle have to be presented before them. Upon presentation of the bride price payments, the marriage will be blessed and legitimization will be given for the outcome of that marriage which is children. Since marriage is intended to produce too many children and especially too many daughters to sustain the whole social debts and bonds, it must be legitimized and blessed upon the presentation of the bride prices.

Marriage is an important social institution among the Nuer. It is important for producing children that sustains the social bond. Bidit Riang, an elder in Pagak stated that:

*Children are wealth. I want to have as many as possible. I married my wife because I want her to give birth to many children. She became exhausted I got another. I will have more children with the third wife if my second wife stops giving birth. (Bidit Riang, an elder, age 68, Pagak: 23/08/15).*

Among the Nuer, one can marry as many wives as his cattle wealth allows but the wife must be outside of his clan and no blood relationship must exist. There are different ways of marriage

arrangements among the Nuer which are also defined by the way the bride price payments are arranged. Generally, there are two forms of marriage arrangements among the Nuer i.e. *Kuencangdar* (formal) and *Kuenkuel* (informal) which are directly related to the arrangement of the bride prices payments. The first one *Kuencangdar* is the official or formal one in which a man chooses his future wife and starts negotiating with his family and the family of the bride on the amount of bride price and the payment of the bride price. This process ends in taking the bridegroom home.

*Kuenkuel* is an informal marriage arrangement. The word *Kuenkuel* stands for "stick payments". Among the Nuer, a bridegroom who fails to put together all the pride payments at once will be punished by beating to death. There are groups of young Nuer in the village for this purpose, beating. They will be told by elders to beat someone who fails to pay his bride-price payments. And sometime, if the family has young boys, they will do the beating for their sisters. This form of marriage arrangement has two manifestations. In the first *Kuenkuel* case, a man might sleep with the girl (with or without the consent of the girl) secretly until it becomes public or she becomes pregnant which makes it public. This is the time a group of young Nuer in the village will run after him and beat him to death until he presents a bull as a sign of readiness for negotiation of the bride price arrangements. Upon presentation of a bull, which will be slaughtered on the day, elders will gather and negotiate about the matters with the family of the groom about the arrangement of the bride price. After negotiation, elders will settle the issue and the man will be forced to pay the bride price. This way of marriage arrangement is mostly done by a man who is unable to pay the bride price at one installment. So the elders may decide for him to pay in installments.

The second *Kuenkuel* arrangement is through what informants called *Kuel-ciek* (Stealing wife). This is a case whereby a man may flee with his lover or future wife to another area. This is mostly done by a man who does not have cattle to pay the bride price and afraid of losing his loved ones until he puts all cattle together to pay the bride price. This is somewhat a risky business for the groom because the girl's family may come after him and kill him. The young group that are supposed to beat him could not find him in the village and this time the responsibility is for her brothers to follow and kill him and bring the girl back to the village. It

might be also possible to negotiate if the future husband informs the elders before being caught that he is willing to return to the village with the bride payments at hand.

Among the Nuer, a man can marry as many wives as he can manage to pay the bride price. Different reasons are given by informants why a man marries many wives. But the central issue here is the production of children. Gatkuoth Reath, an elementary school teacher rationalizes: "no one can live with one wife. One wife will not satisfy a man." (Gatkuoth Reath, Elementary School Teacher, age 28, Pagak: 03/04/16). Satisfaction here is explained not in terms of sexual satisfaction but rather the production of children. Among the Nuer, it is believed that men are not supposed to touch their wife from pregnancy until she stops breastfeeding the child. This could be two years and lack of satisfaction is in this period.

And the other reason why a man marries more than one wife is indirectly related to the approval of the first wife to have another one so that she could get help in producing more children which means more wealth to the family. Nyahok Pal, a housewife with seven children in Bulimkun Kebele, explained that after giving birth to seven children, she became exhausted and asked her husband to marry another wife so that they (together with the new wife) can produce more children for the family (Nyahok Pal, a housewife, age 53, Pagak: 05/04/16). Infertility and sickness of wives could also be the reason for men to marry more wives in the community.

Having many children and the social position one could have is another reason behind having more wives among the Nuer. Gonger Yuel, an elementary school teacher in Pagak, explained that:

*Having one wife is a sign of the poor man and no one will listen to him. More wives mean more wealth and better social status. And it is the same for a wife. A wife without co-wives is less respected, (Gonger Yuel, Elementary School teacher, age 31, Pagak: 03/04/16).*

Generally, among the Nuer, it is important for a man to have many wives to produce more children that will bring more cattle which means more wealth. It is a cultural ideal for a Nuer man to marry more wives, to have more children and to have large herds of cattle which is a sign of success in that social setting.

In this marriage institution, there is also divorce, adultery and wife inheritance which has to do with cattle as well. *Dak* (divorce) is considered as a social malaise that has to be controlled by the bride price arrangement itself. Bride price payment and its arrangement make it almost impossible for women to divorce her husband. To effect divorce, the woman is obliged to pay all the bride price paid to her family. This might not only the number of cattle paid but also she might be asked to bring the same or exact cattle i.e. the same color, size and sex of cattle that was paid to her family during the marriage arrangements. And in case the woman has children, the children will stay with the husband because he had already paid the bride price and he owns children.

The marriage institution seems dominantly male-oriented and for the benefit of the male section of the Nuer community. As discussed in the above paragraphs, after the bride payments have been made and marriage is constituted, it is difficult for a wife to run away from that social institution. An attempt to run away from this contract seems unfavorable or unlikely and costly business for a wife as a female member of the community. Losing her children and the unwelcoming of her family due to the burden of repaying the bride price makes it unlikely for a woman to run away from her husband.

If we look at it from the institutional point of view, the institution is designed in such a way that it is impossible for the women to have divorce. The marriage institution makes it almost impossible for a wife to divorce her husband. That could be the reason for the low level of divorces among the Nuer in Lari. I have not come across much divorce cases in my discussion with informants. What was mostly present in our discussion is having additional wife and wives. This could be a strategy to avoid marriage instability among the Nuer community.

In case of *Dhom* (adultery), there is a sort of fine in heads of cattle. If a man commits adultery, he has to pay some heads of cattle to the husband of the wife he slept with for compensation. If a woman commits, her husband can decide to divorce her and she is also allowed to leave her husband. But given what we said above, divorce seems un plausible for a woman since she has to pay all the bride prices paid.

*Thopniciek* (wife inheritance) is another feature in marriage institutions in Nuer. Among the Nuer, a wife can be inherited by the family of her husband when her husband passes away. As discussed in section 4.2, since the family of the husband paid the bride price, the wife and children are expected to belong to the family of the husband. Since the bride price has already been paid, the wife will continue to produce children for the family of the husband by being transferred to one of his older brothers. This may happen if the woman is not old and is still capable of producing children. Otherwise, she will not be inherited.

### 4.3. Diminishing herds and decline of bride Wealth

Interview with my informants and the micro-cattle census conducted in Pagak *Kebele* (see line graph 1 below) indicate that there has been diminishing of cattle population and thus a decline in average bride price fetched over the period of time between 1996 and 2015. Elders remember



Discussing bride price arrangements with young Nuer men, Lari town, August, 2015. Photo by Roza Asrar

that they used to pay between fifty and sixty heads of cattle for their wives and now the accepted standard is between twenty and twenty-five depending on the wealth of the person. Informants told me that their herd size has diminished over time yet no one was willing or able to tell how many herds exactly he had and how much he has now.

Informants rarely mentioned the

death of cattle due to diseases, lack of water and pasture as causes for the decline of their herds. Gambella region is known for its abundant water and pasture. The abundance of water and pasture attracts other pastoral groups like Lou Nuer and Falata from Jonglei State of South Sudan further east to this green hot lowland. It is for this natural resource that Lou Nuer across the border migrate seasonally between May and September in search of water and pasture for

their cattle. Of course, my informants mention issues of transmitted animal diseases as a threat to their cattle due to the seasonal migration of groups from the west.

My first attempt to get data about the number of herds in each household was unsuccessful. Asking questions like "how many cattle do you have?" or "how many bulls and cows do you own?" and "Do you have goats?" is equal to tempting to know the bank account or bank statement of an individual in an urban setting. There is no counting here and informants told me that they do not count their children and cattle. They associate bad incidences with counting children and cattle. Children or cattle will die if you count them. That is how the idea of conducting a micro-cattle census out came. This is somewhat an indirect way of getting data on how many herds the family got over the years by tracing the bride price payments they paid and heads of cattle fetched to the family.

Fifty-one households were purposively selected to conduct the micro-cattle census. Availability of household heads, the distance of the household and old and new marriages were the criteria used to select the households for the census. Marriages between 1996 and 2015 were selected; 1996 being the oldest and 2015 is recent. A total of 106 marriages were obtained in the census between 1996 and 2015 time intervals which are twenty years.

Instances of marriages with other groups like Nuer marrying an Anywaa were not included or deliberately excluded because of the fact that the bride payments are made in *Demuy* (blue bids the Anywaa group used as a bride price) and cash. In 1997 three marriages, and in 2002 two marriages with the Anywaa women were excluded. Three marriages in 2008; two marriages in 2009; and four marriages in 2011 paid in cash were also excluded from the micro-census.

In the selected households, informants were asked to provide:

- The names of the household head's wives;
- the year he married them;
- the bride price he paid for each one;
- names of the household head's married sons;

### Average bride price in Pagak

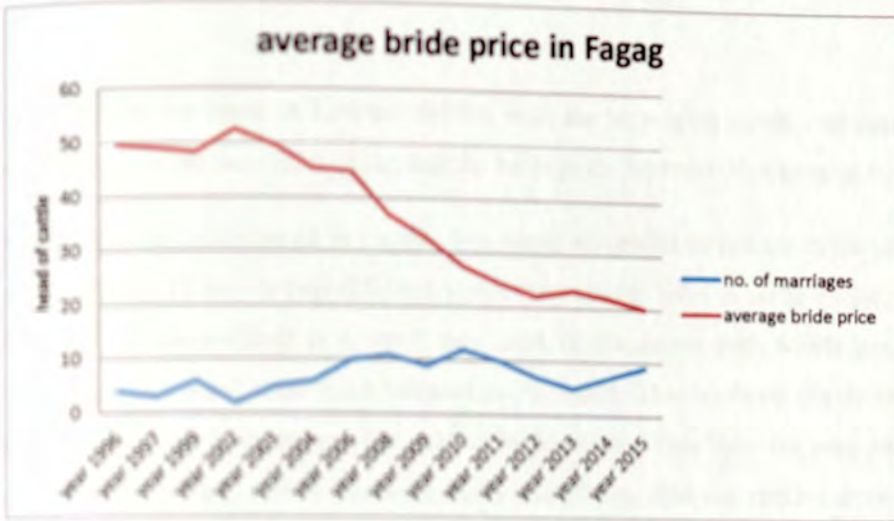
- the year they married their wives;
- the bride price paid for each one;
- names of the household head's married daughters;
- the year they married; and
- the bride price that had been fetched for each one

This gives us a list of names, marriage years and the bride price figures for 106 marriages between 1996 and 2015.

Table 1: Average bride price in Pagak *Kebele* between 1996 and 2015

Year of marriages	Number of marriages found	Average bride price (head of cattle)
1996	4	49.6
1997	3	49.1
1999	6	48.3
2002	2	52.5
2003	5	49.7
2004	6	45.4
2006	10	44.9
2008	11	37.0
2009	9	32.8
2010	12	27.7
2011	10	24.6
2012	7	22.3
2013	5	23.4
2014	7	22.0
2015	9	20.1

Line graph 1: average bride price and year of marriage between 1996 and 2015



The micro-census showed that the highest marriages occurred between the years 2006 and 2011 with 12 marriages in 2010 which is the highest in the last twenty years. The relative peace after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the government of Sudan and SPLM/A in 2005 which also brought relative peace along the border areas in Gambella, and most importantly the return of former soldiers and displaced people back to their villages may have a contribution to the increase in marriage in Pagak *Kebele* (see more details in section 4.4).

The micro-census also showed that bride price in Pagak has declined in the last 20 years from an average 49.6 heads of cattle in 1996 to 20.1 in 2015, a decline of 60% over the past twenty years. It might be problematic to draw an exact correlation between diminishing herd size and decline of bride price fetched with cattle-raiding in the area. But let us look at the relation between the bride price payments and cattle-raiding to understand the link between the two.

#### 4.4. Bride wealth and Cattle-raiding

We have seen in section 4.3 that marriages have been increasing since 2008 and the cultural practice of bride price payments among the Nuer has created more needs for cattle. Paradoxically, herds of cattle have been declining in opposite direction. This opposite direction is manifested in the decline of bride payments fetched over time. This section of the thesis

explains how the Nuer in Lari are dealing with the increasing number of marriages, a practice which needs more and more cattle, and the bride price payments that have to be fetched.

When I ask my informants in Pagak, they seem so careful in linking bride price payments and cattle-raiding. There are two different words they used to refer to cattle-raiding or cattle-stealing. *Pech-hok* (cattle-raiding) is a word they used in discussion with Murle and Lou Nuer raids. Murle and Lou Nuer raids are addressed as *Pech-hok*. This could be due to organized nature of the raiding by the two groups. The raiding by Murle and Lou Nuer are very much organized and supported by rifles, sometimes with many casualties. And the raiding from these two groups ended with the raiding of many cattle from the village and the hope of regaining them is almost absent.

Whereas, when it comes to local raiding, my informants use the word *Kuel-hok* (cattle-stealing). In contrast to *Pech-hok*, the stealing is characterized by less organization and less causality. Moreover, the number of cattle lost will be very small compared to the Murle and Lou Nuer raiding. There is also the possibility to regain lost cattle given the fact that these stealing is made by local young men. And the looted cattle may appear somewhere in local markets and possible to track them.

Therefore, *Kuel-hok* is used for inter-village cattle stealing. This is actually the word informants prefer to use in a discussion about the link between cattle-raiding and bride price arrangements. Probably, they do not link the bride price arrangements and raiding, which is a character given to outside raiders like Murle and Lou Nuer, since the cattle raided by the latter might not be available in the local markets. Stealing is the word informants use to indicate the link that stolen cattle are sold in the market and people buy them to pay their bride price payments mainly in Lari and other Nuer towns.

Regarding the link between cattle-stealing and bride price payments in Lari, Thok Nhiol, a staff of International Rescue Committee in Pagak, carefully speculate about the need for bride price and cattle-raiding in the area:

*Some young boys, who do not have sisters and relatives to help them with cattle, steal cattle from another community to pay the bride price at once. They might steal cattle from far villages and bring them to pay their bride*

*price payments. But since the community knows them, mostly they sell the looted cattle somewhere and they buy other cattle here. People these days learn how to loot so that they pay the bride price at once easily.* (Thok Nhiol, staff of International Rescue Committee, age 34, Lari: 24/04/16).

Other informants oppose these views but acknowledge the existence of stealing. Gatwech Ruach, former Bulimkun village head, explained

*Now a day, some young men are using this [staling] as a means to collect cattle for their bride price. We do not allow stolen cattle to be used for bride price. We [elders] do not accept that. Women married with stolen bride price will be barren and their children will not be blessed.* (Gatwech Ruach, former Bulimkun village head, age 56, Lari: 24/04/16).

The statements above by informants seem to show that the demand and supply gap of cattle in Lari is being filled by what they called *Kuel-hok*. Chuol Bol, Lari *Woreda* Deputy Administrator, explained that since 2008, there have been various incidences of cattle stealing by young people in the *Woreda*. He further explained that to prevent such stealing in the *Woreda*, the regional government has introduced measures such as mobility control (Chuol Bol, Lari *Woreda* Deputy Administrator, aged 42, Lari: 16/08/2015). Despite the measures, stealing of cattle is still the major security problem in the *Woreda*.

Another informant, Gatkuoth Reath who is an elementary school teacher in Lari, added

*These people [cattle thieves] are thieves. They do that not to marry the second wife but they steal cattle for money. It became a habit for them to steal cattle. Many of them have many wives. They just steal cattle to sell them and to drink Areki [locally distilled alcohol].* (Gatkuoth Reath, an elementary school teacher, aged 28, Lari: 26/04/2016).

Nyakong Bol, an educated Nuer woman in Pagak *Kebele* administration explained that stolen or raided cattle are discouraged by elders and should not be used for marriage. This behavior will affect the culture of the Nuer (Nyakong Bol, an elementary school teacher, age 33, Pagak: 21/08/2015). However, she does not deny the link between raiding and bride price. She mentioned some Nuer government employees in the *Woreda* who got married by buying stolen cattle with cheap prices in the market along the Pagak road. Stolen cattle along the road from Lari and Pagak are sold at a relatively cheaper price than the confined market in Lari observed by government authorities (see chapter five section 5.2.1 on market for details). She also

acknowledged the fact that the practice of raiding is rampant in the area not only by other groups across the border (Lou Nuer and Murle) but also by other Nuer clans (Nyakong Bol, an elementary school teacher, age 33, Pagak: 21/08/2015).

The statements from informants indicated that looted cattle from other *Woredas* or *Kebeles* are brought to markets in Lari. Some of these looted cattle are sold as normal in the government designated market in Lari. But most of the looted cattle are traded along the road to Pagak. And potential buyers looking for cheap cattle prefer this market which is the same for sellers who wants to avoid complication with paperwork and taxation in the government-designated market in Lari.

At the same time, informants acknowledged that they eat stolen cattle or sell them to markets in Gambella. Today, the Birr constitutes an important aspect of life in Pagak. People have already started paying their bride price in Birr. With the advancement of the Ethiopian state since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the lowlands of Gambella, money has been introduced to replace cattle for bride price. Since 1991 and later with the establishment of Gambella Peoples Regional State in 1995 as a separate region that the local community began to feel the coming of the market economy at their doorsteps.

With new regional bureaucracy and the expansion of education, many local people got employment in government offices and many junior school graduates of Nuer got government jobs which help them to generate income. The arrival of the market economy makes cattle keeping less attractive. Moreover, the arrival of many different and so many NGOs in Gambella related to the refugee influx due to the civil war in South Sudan brought jobs to the local Nuer. Money has also been injected by these NGOs through employment and aid that makes money presence in the villages.

Moreover, Nuer Diasporas who returned home after some time in refugee camps in Kenya or in the Sudan use the money to pay a bride price or buy cattle in the market. Even though elders refuse looted cattle to be paid for a bride price, the market economy is penetrating deep into the community that Birr or bought cattle are being used for bride price payments.

As the demand for marriage increases, the demand for cattle will also increase. This gap seems being filled by looted cattle stolen somewhere and sold in Lari market. And the availability of Birr more than any time in the *Woreda* due to the presence of different international NGOs and the expansion of government bureaucracies in the *Woreda* facilitates the two-way relationships in which looted cattle are sold in Lari market which could be used either for bride price payments or for meat consumptions.

Informants have also mentioned the issue of increasing cattle market, disarmament and Murle and Lou Nuer in the discussion about raiding and bride price payment prices. Issues of markets along the road to Pagak and uncoordinated disarmament along the border were themes in the discussion with informants and I look at factors about the market, actors and uncoordinated disarmament subsequently. The following chapter present about actors and markets.

## Chapter Five: Cattle Raiding And Other Actors

This chapter presents data about three aspects i.e. actors, markets, and guns in Lari. I discussed who is involved in the cattle-raiding and counter-raiding and the factors for actors' involvement in these violent social interactions and how and what type of relationship exists among actors. It also looks at the flow of guns and disarmament programs along the border between Gambella region and Jonglei state of South Sudan.

Two main types of conflict to seem overlap along the Ethio-South Sudan borderlands. The



Armed Nuer heading to a border post Pagak in Bulimkun Kebele, August, 2015. Photo by Rosa Asrar

Jikany Nuer vs the Lou Nuer conflict is a combination of cattle-raiding and resource scarcity. In dry seasons between December and May, the Lou-Nuer migrates further towards the east where the Jikany Nuer inhabited in search of pasture and water. It is also in this dry season that cattle-raiding intensified following the movement of cattle

from both sides. Thok Lual, Akobo *Woreda* Chief said that Murle raid at any time and unlike Lou Nuer, who raid in the dry season as their seasonal migration, there is no specific season for the Murle raid (Thok Lual, Akobo *Woreda* Chief, age 49, Gambella: 15/08/2015).

The other type of conflict is between Jikany Nuer and Murle which is characterized by cattle-raiding and child-abduction by the Murle. Murle visit the Ethiopian borderlands from their home Pibor at any time and their visit are not for water and pasture but rather cattle-raiding and child-abduction. The focus of this section is to see the relationship between the actors, how it evolves over time and what is influencing the relationships today.

## 5.1. Actors in Cattle-Raiding

### 5.1.1. Jikany Nuer and Lou-Nuer

Conflict in Gambella has always assumed to be inter-ethnic between the Anywaa and the Nuer who are the dominant groups in the regional politics since 1991. Yet, many of the violent conflicts in the region since 1993 have been among the different Nuer clans (Regassa, 2010; Dereje, 2011; Markakis, 2011). Here I discuss one of the inter-clan conflicts among the Nuer i.e. Jikany Nuer and Lou Nuer.

Nuer elders in Lari recounted that in the early days (the 1950s) their territory extended up to Nasir and Akobo in current South Sudan. Even though the Lou had occupied areas around Pibor River, cattle camp youth had to migrate further east to Akobo as their seasonal migration since the water and pasture available in and around Pibor was not enough. Elders have to negotiate on the land sharing arrangements which is still practiced in Akobo today. Dak Puot, a policeman in Pagak, explained that, despite the negotiated agreements, cattle-raiding was/is still conducted by both Jikany and Lou at the end of the dry season just before Lou departed back to their place in Pibor. These are incidences of cattle-raid which are conducted at the end of the negotiated settlements and it did not have many consequences (Dak Puot, a policeman, age 41, Pagak: 24/08/2016).

The recent major violent incidence remembered by many of my informants was the 1993 violent clashes between the two clans. The incidence happened at a seasonal migration route called Dual Dap, along with the border area between Ethiopia and South Sudan. A Gatkir sub-clan of Jikany Nuer elder in Pagak, Dolek Tang, explained the causes of the incidence:

*It was started after quarreling overfishing at Akobo (Akobo River). We (his sub-clan family) perform our ritual to bless the fishing before we start fishing. The ritual is a sacrifice in alcohol. The alcohol is poured into the River to commence the beginning of fishing season. The blessing is also given by elders for each fishing seasons. That time the Lou Nuer cattle camp youth start the fishing without waiting for our ritual. And our people told them to stop fishing. But they refuse and continue fishing. (Dolek Tang, Gatkir sub-clan of Jikany Nuer elder, aged 71, Pagak: 03/04/2016).*

It seems that the cause of the confrontation was lack of understanding (even though they were neighbors). Another elder, Bidit Riang, told the researcher that the Lou perceived the Jikany's

warning not to fish before the ritual as Jikany greediness to stop them fishing. The way the Lou understood it was that the Jikany had already plenty of food and they wanted the Lou to stop fishing on the river and denying access to resources (Bidit Riang, Nuer elder, age 68, Pagak: 23/08/2015). Fishing poles and access to grazing lands have always played an instrumental role in pastoralist communities.

There had also been other extra-local or regional factors that have contributed for the violent clashes between the two Nuer clans around Akobo. The Split of SPLM/A in 1991 and the incidence in Bor<sup>10</sup> had greatly contributed for the later periods of Jikany and Lou relations to get worse. The fall of the socialist Derg regime in Ethiopia which engaged with Sudan in a tit-for-tat by supporting and harboring SPLM/A in Gambella had its impact on SPLM/A too.

The new ruling groups that came to power in 1991 in Ethiopia, with the help of Sudan, expelled SPLM/A out of Gambella and the new Anywaa regime in Gambella also forced Nuer refugees out as SPLM/A slips. The sending back of Nuer refugees to Akobo created pressure on the available pasture and water resources which contributed for the fierce struggle to have access to fishing poles and grazing areas.

The split of SPLM/A in the 1990s has also contributed greatly for the Jikany versus Lou clashes in 1993. The split of SPLM/A led to the establishment of another faction called SPLA-Nasir (latterly called SPLA unity and SSIM) led by Riek Machar which led to tribal fights among the different Nuer clans. The tribal fight is remembered as the Bor massacre and led to the death of many Nuer in Akobo. In Akobo, where the Ethiopian Jikany Nuer and the southern Sudanese Lou Nuer live side by side, there have been violent interactions between these two groups. The clan-based fights between Lou Nuer and Jikany as well as the absence of the Ethiopian authorities in Akobo exacerbated the violent clashes between the Jikany and Lou.

---

<sup>10</sup>The Bor incidence was an event that led to the death of estimated 2,000 civilians in a place called Bor on November 15, 1991 during the Second Sudanese Civil war. The massacre was carried out mostly by Nuer fighters from SPLA-Nasir led by Riek Machar and the militant group known as the Nuer White Army. In the years followed, more than 25,000 more died from famine as their cattle were stolen or shot and the fighting had displaced them from the land they use to cultivate (*thelondonveeningpost.com*. 16 August 2011. Retrieved 20 December 2013.).

Various incidences happened along Akobo and Jikaw lines since the Bor incidence. The five-year interlude peacetime due to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was not as peaceful as it was expected for borderland communities in Akobo. The reports at the Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau indicated that there have been different incidences of violence between the Jikany and Lou Nuer in Akobo. For instance, the 2007 violent incidence in a place called Waar led to the killing of many people and looting of cattle<sup>11</sup>. Most of these incidences are not reported well. It is only when the casualties are high that incidences will be reported to Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau (Keak Chot, Deputy head, Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau, aged 48, Gambella: 10/08/2015).

For instance, in May 2009<sup>12</sup>, a violent incidence happened near Akobo where Lou Nuer youth attacked Jikany villages in the middle of the night. The village was surrounded on all three sides and armed youth walked through the village, reportedly killing over a hundred civilians and injuring another fifty. Survivors of the attack told government officials that Lou Nuer went from house to house and shooting people in their tukuls and burn it down. Most of the victims were women and children and some of them survived by pretending to be dead.

The month of May is the end of the dry season and an informant commented that "*it has become a ritual for the Lou to raid cattle at the end of the dry season as a good-bye gift for their fellow Nuer*" (Chol Bol, Deputy Woreda Administrator, age 42, Lari: 16/08/2015). The explanation for this particular incidence from the Lou was that cattle had been stolen from their camp, and the attack was a retaliation to return their lost cattle. The report of the regional government indicated that more than 300 cattle have been stolen by Lou Nuer youth in the May 2009 raid (Thok Lual, Aboko Woreda Chief, age 49, Gambella: 29/04/2016).

In 2010, peace agreement was made between the representatives of the two clans in Akobo, facilitated by Gambella Regional State and Jonglei State which brought relative peace for the next year until another incidence happened at the beginning of 2011 (Bol Bol, Regional Security Advisor to the President, age 31, Gambella: 12/08/15). Despite the peace settlement, cattle-

<sup>11</sup> The Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau archived some of the incidences that witnessed huge casualties. Yet, there is no reporting of all incidences and reports are not archived well.

<sup>12</sup> Report, Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau, May 2009.

raiding continued to be carried out with impunity by Lou youth. In early 2011, a violent raid for two days displaced five Nuer villages in Akobo and the looting of many cattle by Lou Nuer<sup>13</sup>. Similarly, in December 2012 violent clashes broke out in Akobo and led to the displacement of 21 Villages of which 17 were Nuer and the 4 were Anywaa villages in Akobo<sup>14</sup>.

Besides violent clashes along the border, there have been tensions between Jikany and Lou Nuer in Pinyudo refugee camps in Ethiopia. A Jikany Nuer NGO staff, Thok Nhiol, claimed that a Lou member of an NGO workers unfairly threat Jikany Nuer refugees in the refugee camp and thus the Jikany in the camp demanded all the Lou return to South Sudan. Tension partially existed due to a Jikany perception that NGOs have hired a disproportionate number of Lou staff, despite the fact that the Jikany are the host community in Gambella (Thok Nhiol, NGO staff, age 34, Pagak: 23/08/2015).

It was only since 2012 that the increasing nature of violent cattle-raiding along the border begun to attract the attention of the two national governments. The first Joint Ministerial Commission meeting between Ethiopia and South Sudan was held in Juba, South Sudan, from February 27<sup>th</sup> to March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012<sup>15</sup>. The main objective was to establish a joint border Administrators /Governors Commission to address matters concerning cattle theft and violence along the common border. Later in January 2013, senior army officers of Ethiopia and South Sudan have signed an agreement to work together on issues related to ensuring peace and security along their common border<sup>16</sup>.

Recently, in 2014, in an attempt to reduce tensions and promote unity and military cooperation in the current warfare, Lou and Jikany chiefs held talks in Gambella in the beginning of 2014 to settle a number of cattle thefts (Bol Bol, Regional Security Advisor to the President, age 31, Gambella: 12/08/2015). However, the frequent clashes between the Jikany and Lou Nuer threaten the peace along the border and since 2014 the Jikany versus Murle confrontation shifted priorities and a few Jikany youth even cooperated with the Lou in their attacks against the Murle.

<sup>13</sup> Report, Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau, February 2011

<sup>14</sup> Report, Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau, January 2013.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sudantribune.com/South-Sudan-Ethiopia-sign-security,42139>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.sudantribune.com/South-Sudan-Ethiopia-sign-security,42139>

### 5.1.2. Jikany Nuer and Murle

Ethiopian Jikany Nuer and Murle are not close neighbors and today they do not share borders with each other. Nuer elders in Lari claimed that up until the 1950s, the territory of today's Nasir, where the Murle lives today, was their homeland. The expansion of the Lou Nuer for pasture and water towards the east has pushed them further to the east i.e. to Gambella. Murle is from Pibor county of South Sudan and their close neighbors are Lou Nuer, Anywaa, and Dinka. And Murle do not migrate to Ethiopian side of the border in search of water and pasture as their Lou Nuer neighbors do. They visit the Ethiopian Jikany Nuer mainly for cattle-raiding and child abduction. This makes the Murle one of the most feared groups among the Jikany Nuer in Gambella.

The early contact between the Jikany Nuer and the Murle goes back to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was during the Second World War, during the British colonial time of southern Sudan that the first clashes happened in a place called Biem (close to Pochalla of South Sudan) that the two groups fought for more than a week over a bull. Ruach Lul, an elder in Lari narrated that:

*The fight started over quarreling about whose bull was the strongest i.e. Nuer or Murle. The youth from the two groups organized a bullfight. Unfortunately, the Nuer bull was killed by the Murle bull. Angry against the Murle, the Nuer youth killed the Murle herder and drove away his cattle. Later on, the Murle retaliate by killing Nuer youth and taking more cattle from Nuer villages. (Ruach Lul, Nuer elder, aged 69, Lari: 25/04/2016).*

There are multiple narratives of this story from other informants. But the general theme of the story remains the same which is the Murle start the fight or start the raiding. As informants claimed, this is how the cattle-raiding started between the Jikany Nuer and the Murle. Some informants also mentioned the first civil war in the Sudan between 1950 and 1970s and the associated movement called the Anya-Aya movement<sup>17</sup> to be responsible for the intensification of raids by the Murle. As most of the Nuer were in this movement, the Murle fought them backed by the government in Khartoum.

---

<sup>17</sup> The Anya-Nya Movement was a southern Sudanese rebel movement formed during the first Sudanese civil war that lasted between 1955-1972. Anyanya means snake poison in Madi language.

There have been various incidences of cattle-raiding and child-abduction by the Murle along the border since the 1960s. It is almost impossible to find government reports of the incidence in this time but informants provide different narratives of the attack of Murle. However, the Murle attack intensified since the end of the Sudanese civil war. Discussions with informants and police chief in Lari showed that the Murle raid intensified after 2005. This could be due to the fact that during the civil war Murle had no access to the Ethiopian side of the border that was controlled by SPLM/A during the 1990s and early 2000. But the end of the civil war along the border demilitarizes the area which opens the way for Murle to reach the Ethiopian borderlands.

Murle is believed to have strong military ties with Khartoum during the longest Sudanese civil war. Murle fought SPLM/A in Southern Sudan during the Sudanese civil war backed by Khartoum. The end of the Sudanese civil war in the Sudan and the evacuation of SPLM/A along the Ethiopian border make the Jikany Nuer vulnerable to Murle attacks. The borderlands remain insecure due to in fights among the various faction groups fighting Juba and Addis Ababa. And today, the Murle resistance to post-independence SPLM and that enemy relations with SPLM/A has continued after South Sudan became independent.

The Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau report indicated that between the beginning of 2011 and 2013, Murle killed fifty people; wounded more than forty-four people; abducted thirteen children, and two thousand six hundred and ten cattle and two hundred forty goats were stolen by the Murle<sup>18</sup>.

In May 2013 the Murle made a night attack at a place known as Bil-Rut in Wanthor district, Nuer Zone and killed seven people; abducted four boy children and wounded many people. The dead people include children, both old men and women and both young women and men<sup>19</sup>. On 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014 the Murle cattle raiders also made another night attack at a place named Muon, near Jikaw, and abduct seven children; killed six people in which two were women. They also wounded seven people in which three were men, two women, and two children<sup>20</sup>.

---

<sup>18</sup> Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau, Report, 07/02/2014.

<sup>19</sup> Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau, Report, 07/02/2014.

<sup>20</sup> Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau, Report, 07/02/2014.

There have been unreported incidences. There is no culture of documenting and reporting incidences unless the casualties are high. Child abduction and cattle raiding are the daily practice of the Murle in Lari and Jikaw areas. Loc Nen, a cattle keeper, said that *“raiding and abduction is the culture of Murle”* (Loc Nen, cattle keeper, aged 22, Lari: 22/04/2016). Deng Tut, a village leader has to say: *“Nowadays, most of the raiding and child abduction is the action of the Murle. Child-abduction is part of their culture as cattle-raiding is”* (Deng Tut, a village leader, aged 57, Lari: 23/04/2016).

Informants told a number of myth and story about Murle's raiding and abduction. One of the main stories is the fact that Murle does not farm and therefore totally dependent on cattle for their livelihood. People in Lari make jokes out of the Murle. Some of these live jokes among informants are:

Murle consider all cattle in the world belong to them and hence raiding is legitimized as a means of getting their stolen cattle from the Nuer.

One captured Murle raider saw canned NIDO Milk (with a picture of a cow on it) in Gambella and he asked for when the cow will walk out from the can.

Murle claimed that they do not tie or lock their cattle in cattle kraal. The Nuer ties and locks their cattle in cattle kraal because if they leave them untied and unlocked, the cattle will run to their owner who is Murle.

Cattle-raiding by the Murle is characterized as more dangerous than by Lou Nuer. This is partly because of the tactics used by the Murle in raiding and their unique action of child-abduction. Both Nyon, Lari *Woreda* security head narrated:

*Murle, unlike the Lou, are very armed and came in big numbers not only to villages but everywhere cattle and child can be found. Lou do not kill people*

*and they do not take children. They came in small numbers and in the dry season. (Hoth Nyon, Lari Woreda security head, aged 35, Lari: 17/08/2015).*

Kong Thok, the Woreda police officer has also noted

*Murle is also known for their tactic in looting many cattle. They put lion fat on their skin so that the cattle smell it and think the lion is around. This makes many cattle to run fast in a direction the Murle wanted. (Kong Thok, Woreda police officer, age 31, Lari: 18/08/2015).*

From informant's statement, it seems that the Lou Nuer attack could be managed since the time they will come is predictable. They will come in dry seasons between December and May. The casualties recorded in Lou Nuer attacks are not worse as Murle's attack. The Murle come to any area at any time and mostly they come in night time which makes it difficult for the local militias to protect the villages. Kong Thok also added

*Murle is notorious, they kill anyone. They kill parents to take children and kill anybody on their way for confiscating shoes and cloth and not to be followed. They kill people for just cloth and shoes. They do not leave old men and women. Murle kill people for no reason. (Kong Thok, Woreda police officer, aged 31, Lari: 18/08/2015).*

One of the main issues that make Murle very feared in Lari is their action of child-abduction. Murle does not abduct anyone in the villages. But they prefer children between the ages of 7-10. And girls are also preferred than boys. The following are some of the controversial answers to the question why Murle abduct children and why girls?

Hoth Nyon, a security head of Lari Woreda explained that:

*They abduct children and preferably girls mainly for cattle. Like the Nuer, the Murle also used cattle as bride price. So if they abduct a girl, she will be a source of cattle when she is to be married. The future husband brings cattle to her family when she is ready to marry. If they abduct a boy, he will be raised as Murle and he will be Murle. He will raid and abduct again when he becomes young. (Hoth Nyon, Lari Woreda security head, aged 35, Lari: 17/08/2015).*

Gatluak Pal, Woreda Prison administrator said:

*It is our sons who were abducted long time ago who are now looting our cattle and our girls. They do not know that we are relatives because they were converted to Murle. They became Murle and unlike us [Nuer] who have*

*six scars [scar] on the forehead, their lower tooth is removed instead.* (Gatluak Pal, Woreda Prison administrator, aged 33, Lari: 25/04/2016).

Chol Bol, Deputy Woreda Administrator explained

*We hear from Lou Nuer that Murle has got a disease that is sexually transmitted. These diseases make them unable to get children. Due to this, they take children to raise them as Murle. We also hear that they buy children from Lou Nuer. They want to have girls. When they come here, they took more girls than boys.* (Chol Bol, Deputy Woreda Administrator, age 42, Lari: 16/08/2015).

The issue of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis that makes the Murle infertile or less fertile and hence abducts children is somewhat ambiguous. But some studies in South Sudan (Riak Akuei, et.al, 2010: 53) indicated that the kidnappings are motivated by Murle's low fertility rate which, in turn, is allegedly caused by widespread sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) within the Murle community. The studies indicate a relatively low population growth in Murle society, and a low population growth is likely to be attributed to livelihood related factors.

The stigmatizations of the Murle and their alleged reputation may exacerbate the Murle's perception of themselves as being politically and economically marginalized. Reinforced by the geographical isolation of Pibor country, this has resulted in a sense of insecurity and defensiveness among the Murle who appear to have limited trust in post-independent government authorities in South Sudan which they fought against during the civil war. Apparently, the negative sentiments towards the Murle community are arguably rooted in the civil war, when elements of the Murle youth were mobilized to fight against the SPLM/A and other militia factions as part of Khartoum's divide and rule strategy (Riak Akuei, et.al, 2010: 59).

Children being sold in Pibor have also been mentioned in discussion with key informants in Gambella and Lari. There are indications that abducted children are sold to Murle in Pibor. Chol Bol, Lari Deputy Woreda Administrator explained

*When the Ethiopian government attempted to bring back abducted children in 2014, some of the children were transferred to another area in the form of trade. There are people who abduct children here and transfer them to Murle for cattle. We heard that abducted children are sometimes transferred to Murle in the form of trade.* (Chol Bol, Lari Deputy Woreda Administrator, aged 42, Lari: 16/08/2015).

Keak Chot, the Regional Security Advisor to the President, explained

*Some of the children abducted from Akobo and Jikaw in 2014 were taken to Pibor in South Sudan. In Pibor, they were sold to Murle. We realize this while we were asked cattle in return for the children since they bought them in cattle. Some people sell children to Murle couples that are not able to have children themselves. It is also believed that Lou Nuer themselves abduct children and sell them to Murle in Pibor. (Keak Chot, the Regional Security Advisor to the President, aged 48, Gambella: 10/08/15).*

It was possible to interview three abducted children by Murle in 2011 and who were returned after three years in 2014 by the Ethiopian authorities. One was abducted while she was 11 and returned at 14. The other one was 9

when she was abducted. They told the researcher that they were given to another family upon arrival. The family of one of the returned child told that parents were asked to give cattle for their child to be returned (Walang Puot, Housewife, aged 41, Lari: 27/04/2016). And the local chiefs involved in the returning of abducted children have found that children were sold to different families and some



Children abducted in 2011 and returned back in 2014, Lari, August 2015. Photo by Roza Asrar

payments in the form of cattle were arranged to get them back (Thok Lual, Akobo *Woreda* Chief, aged 49, Gambella: 29/04/2016). Security officials in Gambella also suspected that there is Market for children in Pibor where abducted children are sold for Murle (Bol Bol, Regional Security Advisor to the President, aged 31, Gambella: 12/08/2015).

In every incidence of child-abduction and cattle-raiding, there is the name Murle behind. I asked how they distinguish who committed the raiding and abduction. People refer to some incidences between 2011 and 2012 where one Murle was killed and two captured by the local militia in Lari. The Murle killed and captured had an identity marker (the lower teeth being removed) which is highly associated with raiding and abduction today. Gatluak Pal, Lari *Woreda* Prison Administrator stated

*In May 2011 one Murle was killed and two Murle men were captured and taken to Gambella prison. One of the distinguishing features found on these captured Murle men was the fact that they do not have lower teeth. Murle removes one lower tooth. Thus the assumption is anyone missing one lower tooth and found raiding is obviously Murle. The Lou Nuer do another mark on the body i.e. they are marked with six horizontal cuts on their forehead from ear to ear. (Gatluak Pal, Lari Woreda Prison Administrator, age 33, Lari: 24/04/2016).*

Nowadays, Murle is a scapegoat in Lari Woreda, every raiding and abduction is taken as Murle's action. This scapegoat is used by some neighbor clans like Lou Nuer and Anuak and other groups from South Sudan as a strategy of raiding another neighbor. Any incidence of cattle-raiding and child abduction is blamed on the Murle. Lari Woreda administrator suspects that the blaming is used by youth members of the community to engage in raiding without being noticed which is making cattle-raiding a lucrative business in Lari and Jikaw areas.

## 5.2. Markets and Cattle-Raiding

### 5.2.1. Markets and Cattle-Raiding in Lari

Saturday, Tuesday, and Thursday are cattle market days in Lari, Saturday being the biggest. Lari cattle market was established in June 2010 and is a confined place in the northern direction of the city. A separate wooden fence that covers a total size of half a hectare is where the potential buyers, cattle, and sellers meet and negotiate. The two trading partner; buyers and sellers come from different places to this confined market. They come from Gambella, Itang and Jikaw and the surrounding villages. The *Qeret Sebsabi* (tax collector who levy taxes on cattle transactions), daily laborers to pull cattle; people who lost cattle and want to check if the cattle come for sale and ordinary observers like me wait in and around the confined place.



Early morning Saturday Cattle market, Lari, August 2017.  
Photo by Rosa Azar

The market starts early in the morning from 8 A.M on and more cattle comes as the day progresses until mid-day, lunchtime. What wonders me were not actually the cattle inside the market. But rather where did these cattle come from and how traders conducted trading in cattle i.e. what are the rules and mechanisms in cattle trading? What are the bases of trading and how is trust developed between buyer and seller? These questions are based on the discussions I had with informants about the raiding and selling of looted cattle which becomes a serious problem in Lari.

There have been cases reported to the *Woreda* police about looted cattle being sold in Lari Market and the *Woreda* Police had made 76 arrests in 2009 and 2010. Those arrested were accused of looting cattle and selling them as legal in Lari Market (Kong Thok, Lari *Woreda* Police officer, aged 31, Lari, 18/08/2015). How do people deal with cattle market in Lari is the question while I was in the market. For cattle markets like in Lari where looted cattle are sold, there must be some level of trust among the actors in the transaction processes.

The trust in Lari market is constituted mainly by two bodies. Security i.e. the police and security guards in and around the market and *Qeret Sebsabi* i.e. tax collector and the paper he produces for each transaction. There are a couple of regional police members around the market to make sure that the person entering the market has a letter of approval from the *Kebele* chief to move with his cattle. Besides they keep the market free of any disturbance. The *Qeret Sebsabi* is responsible for inspecting the transaction and producing paper works at the end of the negotiation that legitimizes the transaction.

The way trust is built in this small market is a form of authority that has a legitimate power to give guarantee for both buyers and sellers. There are members of the regional police around the market which represent the state's (the regional state) authority. They are a sign that there is a legitimate authority maintaining peace and order. These coercive apparatus of the state is working in line with its soft power manifested through the *Qeret Sebsabi* and the paper he produces at the end of each transaction. At the end of the negotiation, buyer and seller should have to go to the *Qeret Sebsabi* (tax collector) who produces a paper as a legitimation of the trade.

Buyers and sellers negotiate before they go to *Qeret Sebsabi*. Many factors are considered for negotiation of the price of cattle. Age, sex, horn, and fattiness of the cattle determine the price besides the current cattle price in the market. After they agreed, they will go to *Qeret Sebsabi* to pay the taxes expected of the transaction and to legitimize the trading. Majak Chol, who is Lari cattle market *Qeret Sebsabi*, told to the researcher that buyers and sellers always present less than what they agreed upon to pay less tax. But I have to make a decision which I consider is correct (Majak Chol, *Qeret Sebsabi*, aged 26, Lari: 25/08/2017). He has also the authority not to accept exaggerated prices.



Majak Chol, tax collector levying taxes, Lari cattle market, August, 2017.  
Photo by Roza Asrar

The *Qeret* (tax) is a means of legitimization of the transaction among the three actors. The *Qeret Sebsabi*, a legitimizer who is a representative of a regional state, levy taxes on both sellers and buyers. He collects six percent of the total transaction. Majak Chol, explained that three percent of the tax is for the town administration and the other three percent is to the Lari *Woreda* finance (Majak Chol, *Qeret Sebsabi*, aged 26, Lari: 25/08/2017). So he produced three copies of papers. One for the buyer, one for the town administration and one for the *Woreda* finance. The copy given to the buyer is a guarantee that he buys the cattle in a legitimate trade by paying taxes to the government. The copy of the paper also guarantees the buyer that he buys not a stolen cattle and the government was a witness to the transaction. The other two sets of copies are for the government that collects the tax and ensures the legitimacy of the cattle trade in Lari cattle market.



Cattle for sale along the road to Pagak, August, 2017 Photo by Roza Asrar

My observation inside and around the market seems business as usual. However, a kilometer or two outside Lari particularly, along the way to Pagak, people make negotiations and trading cattle before they reach Lari Town cattle market. I saw transactions along the road to Pagak, particularly in Blumkun *Kebele*. Here trade is conducted mainly for two reasons; avoidance of paper control by police and avoidance of tax which, together makes the cattle in this market very cheap.

Avoidance of tax and free ride is the failure of the cattle market in Lari. People who seek free ride and avoid the six percent taxes for the government prefer to walk along the road to Pagak and they negotiate without considering the tax they could have paid in Lari cattle market. However, there is an interesting transaction here. The main reason why cattle are cheap in this market is the source of the cattle. Every potential buyer going to this market knows that he may buy looted cattle. Moreover, the potential buyers have more bargaining power but fewer guarantees given the fact that the seller is ready to sell it as soon as possible. Transaction along the road to Pagak is more swift and quick and no paperwork and check-ups. Since no guarantee is produced here, most of the potential buyers are traders who take cattle to other markets and traders who provide cattle for restaurants and hotels in Lari and Gambella town.

### 5.2.2. *Guit-guite* and the hidden trade in cattle in Lari

My informants in Lari address cattle trade along the road to Pagak as *Guit-guite*. Someone who is planning to marry but fail to put together all the bride price will be advised to go to *Guit-guite*. *Guit-guite* is a Nuer phrase that stands for young men who do not have a father or close relatives. *Guit-guite* is one of the ways of getting cattle in a more affordable way for poor young Nuer who wants to marry. So the term refers to both looting and market. I suspect from the interviews that the word evolved from looting to that of the market.

Historically, the word *Guit-guite* refers to those people who do not have a father and close relatives and hence rely on cattle-raiding or looting to accumulate cattle. As explained in

section 4.3, the payment of bride price is the responsibility of the husband family. Someone who lost his father or close relatives has to rely on his own to put all the cattle together for bride-price payments. Most young Nuer have been and continue to practice this till today.

The word evolved to referring to markets for looted cattle in line with multiple incidences between 2006 and 2011 in Lari, Jikaw, and Akobo. What happened between 2006 and 2011 was a series of raids in different parts of the Nuer *Woredas*. Lari, Jikaw, Makuye, and Akobo were highly affected by the raids. Later on, the Gambella Regional Police with the help of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces made many arrests. In Lari alone more 76 young men from different *Kebeles* were arrested. They were suspected of looting cattle from different villages/*Kebeles*. Similar arrests were made in other *Woredas* that suffer from the same raiding problem.

Hoth Nyon, Lari *Woreda* Security head, explained

*Many young men in our Woreda involved in cattle-raiding. We found out that they were caught in Makuye and Jikaw Woredas while selling cattle in Markets in Jikaw and Makuye. They were brought here. At the same time among the young men caught in our Woreda, there were young people from Jikaw and Makuye Woreda whom we transfer to their respective Woredas. (Hoth Nyon, Woreda Security Head, aged 35, Lari, 17/08/2015).*

The Chuol Bol, Deputy *Woreda* administrator had explained

*These young men are actually engaged in the raiding of cattle in our Woreda but transfer what they looted to other fellow young men in other Woreda, particularly to Makuye Woreda. There was a small group of Guit-guite who engaged in cattle looting and selling. The one in our Woreda loot here and transfer them to their fellow Guit-guite in Mekuye Woreda. In return, they receive cattle from the group in Makuye who also engaged in looting in their Woreda and brought them here as legitimate cattle and sell them here. (Chuol Bol, Deputy Woreda Administrator, aged 42, Lari, 16/08/2015).*

The explanation above from the interviews indicated that the word *Guit-guite* is no longer for young people who do not have a father or close relatives. The word is now associated with the practice of cattle looting and selling. Today in Lari, people use the term to refer to young men who loot and sell cattle. The evolution of the term referring to helpless young Nuer to raider and thief include in its category more people that are not necessarily young people who have not the

father or close relatives but anyone who practice cattle raiding and selling in markets outside the legal Lari cattle market.

What explains the new phenomenon in *Guit-guite* is the fact that cattle-looting is being done in an organized and market-oriented manner which indicates a departure from the previous *Giut-guite* practice for bride prices. As the *Woreda* Deputy administrator indicated they are small organized young men across different *Woredas*. They loot in their respective *Woreda* but transfer them to their fellow young men who sell the cattle as normal and legal in another *Woreda*. And in the same way, they receive the same number of cattle from the other *Guit-guite* in another *Woreda* and brought them in their own *Woreda* to sell them in the market.

After the regional government discovered the organized movement of the *Guit-guite*, it introduced a means of control for inter-*Woreda* and inter-*Kebele* cattle control in 2008. The new means of control demanded anyone walking with cattle a letter of approval from his *Kebele* chief. The letter of approval states from which *Kebele* to which he is moving with cattle. This had created mobility issues for pastoralists in search of water for their cattle. And it seems that there is always a way out for *Guit-guite*. They got the latter in one way or another mainly in through form of nepotism and corruption.

Since 2010, an additional measure is introduced to control cattle theft. This measure is to have a central cattle market in each *Woreda* and cattle selling to be conducted under state supervision. This means any cattle trade outside the designated *Woreda* cattle market is not allowed and have legal implications. Cattle trade must be conducted in this area and with the approval of the regional authorities.

Despite the different controlling mechanisms introduced by the regional government, there are always market failures manifested here in along the road to Pagak where cattle are cheaper but without a government guarantee. And at the same time, there are people willing to engage in this type of environment. Here, there is a chance of getting cattle at cheaper prices and in a quick manner. People who need cattle for immediate consumptions or who want to take them to other places prefer to walk on the road to Pagak. And the main reason this road is preferred is that it is the only outlet to South Sudan. The boundary marker in peacetime between Ethiopian side of

Pagak and South Sudanese side of Pagak is a bridge over the river, 18 kilometers away from Lari. Akobo is another trading post for goods from Ethiopia for areas like Jonglei which are under the control of SPLM-IO that used Akobo as its main outlet to trade. An Ethiopian businessman who trades along Gambella-Abobo mentioned that cattle are among the main item for Ethiopian traders in Akobo (Aynalem, Degenga trader, age 29, Lari: 25/04/2016).

### **5.3. Actors along the Border and the April 15, 2016, Attack**

#### **5.3.1. Actors along the Border**

The Southwest Ethiopian lowland periphery remains a forum for armed struggle in the country. The current ruling regimes in Ethiopia and South Sudan had their bases along this porous border. The borderland continues to serve as a launching pad for discontented armed factions waging attacks against Addis Ababa and Juba. Today, there are plenty of armed resistance groups along this porous border. Some of them are bandits and criminal gangs without political agenda who used the war economy around South Sudan as a survival strategy.

Organized armed groups such as the Ethiopian Peoples Patriotic Front (EPPF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Gambella Peoples Liberation Movement/Front (GPLM/F) operate along the border<sup>23</sup>. The Ethiopian government blames the Eritrean government to be the main supply of armament to these armed groups in Gambella. Recently, after the independence of South Sudan, there are also armed groups fighting to topple the government in Juba. Murle's General David Yau Yau and SPLM-IO emerged as an armed group fighting Juba in Jonglei State of South Sudan (The Sudd Institute, 2012).

Since 2015, the SPLA-IO is also alleging that SPLA-Juba is supporting an Ethiopian rebel movement, which has been involved in attacking their positions in Upper Nile. The leader of this movement is named as Thuwath Pal, a Jikany Nuer. Thuwath Pal was the governor of the Gambella region in the 1980s, before the fall of Derg regime in 1991. When the regime fell he fled along with the SPLA and South Sudanese refugees in Sudan. Pal later began a movement

<sup>23</sup> Yedla News, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014. "Three Ethiopian Rebel Groups Heading for a Merger." <http://www.yedlanews.net/three-ethiopian-rebel-groups-heading-for-a-merger/>

known as the Ethiopian Patriotic United Front (EPUF) in the late 1990s and allegedly went for training in Eritrea where he was also given weapons<sup>22</sup>.

Thok Lual, Akobo *Woreda* chief indicated the link between the armed groups along the border and the violent cattle theft in Akobo *Woreda* (Thok Lual, Akobo *Woreda* Chief, aged 49, Gambella: 15/08/2015). In recent times the cattle thefts become organized and violent indicating the involvement of armed groups. The *Woreda* chief explained the cattle-raiding phenomenon in Akobo:

*They are raiding and killing people and children to inflict damage on the people along the border. By attacking the vulnerable groups, they claim victory and success on the Ethiopian government. They want to show the vulnerability of the local people and the inability of the Ethiopia National Defence Forces (ENDF) stationed in Gambella to reach these areas. (Thok Lual, Akobo *Woreda* Chief, aged 49, Gambella: 15/08/2015).*

As Thok explained, raiding of communities along the porous border might be a strategy of the armed oppositions to inflict damage and show the vulnerability of the borderland communities. It is also a way of a hit-and-run by the armed oppositions who are unable to engage in conventional warfare with the Ethiopian National Defence Forces. This could also be a strategy in their conflict dynamics in the region.

Thok also explained the economic side of raiding by armed groups along the border:

*Some of the bandits [referring to GPLM] rely on looting and raiding for their survival in the jungle. They loot for consumption. They rely on raiding and looting of the borderland communities for their food. They also use looted cattle as a means of gaining weapons. They exchange cattle in weapons with other armed groups. So looted cattle are used by the armed groups for consumption and sold as a means of finance or exchanged with weapons. (Thok Lual, Akobo *Woreda* Chief, age 49, Gambella: 15/08/2015).*

It is difficult to prove the claims regarding the cattle trade and exchange with weapons in this porous border. The area is so insecure that the *Woreda* Chief is taking a refugee in Gambella himself. When I was in Gambella in August 2015, Akobo was unreachable due to the insecurity

<sup>22</sup> Tesfa News, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014. "Three Ethiopian Rebel Groups Heading for a Merger." <http://www.tesfanews.net/three-ethiopian-rebel-groups-heading-for-a-merger/>

situation caused by the fighting between SPLM-IO and Juba Government and of course the rainy season.

But the organized nature of the cattle-raiding since recent times in the area definitely shows the involvement of organized armed groups in cattle-raiding practice. The magnitude and casualties and the number of children and cattle being looted are seriously increasing since 2011. The April 2016 violent incidence which led to the death of more than 200 people and the abduction of more than 100 children and the looting of more than 2000 cattle could be an example.

### **5.3.2. April 15, 2016, Attack in Lari**

On April 15, 2016, more than 3,000 armed groups from South Sudan burned down thirteen villages of which five villages were in Lari. The deadly raid happened on early the morning Friday and left 208 people dead including mothers and children, in addition to 80 casualties, 102 children abducted and over 2,000 cattle stolen on the day. This attack is unique and never happened before on such a scale. The Ethiopian authorities have blamed the attack on Murle gunmen and declared two days of national mourning.

I was in Gambella Town luckily at the time and as many people in Gambella I was shocked by the news. The first thing I did was calling to people whom I know in Lari who helped me to get access to villages. No one was answering my call. Later on in the afternoon, I met an informant who worked with the International Rescue Committee who came to Gambella to hospitalize his two brothers who were shot by the attackers. Unfortunately, I was unable to ask questions I had at the time and I myself was in shock and running to leave Gambella.

After a year, I came back to Gambella and I traveled to Lari and Bulimkun Kebele. This time, with more questions than I had a year ago. Who are the attackers? Are they really Murle? Where did they come from? And what was the motive for the raid?

*If it is not your day, you will not die. Many people died in the village [Bulimkun]. It was a cursed day. We have never had such an attack in my lifetime. They were many in number. Cattle were not enough for them; they did not spare children and women. They killed everyone in the village. Some of them had military uniforms but not all. Many of them had the same*

*hairstyle and wear plastic shoes. (Tut Chan, elder in Bulimkun, age 69, Lari: 23/08/2017).*

For my informants in Lari, they have never seen Murle in military uniforms and they confirm that the attackers do not remove their lower tooth like the Murle. Rather they cut their foreheads in six lines which is an identity marker of the Nuer and Dinka. However, Nuer and Dinka had never raid together and Dinka never raids the Jikany Nuer. Dinka and Jikany Nuer do not share borders since the Lou Nuer inhabited the area between the two.

Seventy attackers were killed by the local militia in Jikaw and Lari. It was witnessed from the slain body that the attackers were both Murle and Dinka. If the attackers were not Murle alone, the next question is what is the motive of the attack and how did they manage to reach Jikaw and Lari. Jikaw and Lari areas are far from Dinka area and Lou Nuer inhabited in the middle. So the Dinka would not be welcomed by the Lou Nuer if they tried to pass through Akobo. Moreover, since 2013 violent conflict between SPLM-IO and Juba, Akobo and Lou Nuer areas are controlled by Machar forces and Dinka would not get access to this line.

Hoth Nyon, *Woreda* Security Head suspected

*We think they came from a place called Likuangole [which is located in Boma, Pibor] through the Gambella National Park. No one was able to detect them since they came through the park. We also heard that they make arrangements with the Anyuak bandits [Anyuak resistance fighting the Ethiopian government] so they passed without a problem. (Hoth Nyon, Lari Woreda Security head, age 51, Lari: 24/08/2017).*

There have been many attacks in the past by Lou Nuer and Murle and its aim was for cattle and children. The Friday attack was unique in its magnitude and casualties. According to the New York Times<sup>23</sup>, Ethiopian officials have denied that the attackers were connected to the South Sudanese government and have also downplayed the timing of the attack, which coincided with the planned travel of



Three children in Bulimkun, returned in August after four months, Lari, August 2017. Photo by Roza Asrar

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/18/world/africa/deadly-attacks-in-ethiopia-leave-victims-wondering-why.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/18/world/africa/deadly-attacks-in-ethiopia-leave-victims-wondering-why.html?_r=0)

SPLM-IO Chairman Rick Machar to Gambella en route to Juba. Machar was to travel by road from Pagak through Lare district to Gambella to fly to Juba.

*We heard five consecutive gunshots in Wuret in Nipnip, the next Kebele here [directing to the Kebele] in the early morning of Friday. We had an earlier Murle raid before a month and we were expecting the same. But after half an hour our village [Bulimkun] was encircled and they began to kill indiscriminately, anyone in the village. People run to everywhere, children and women run in the separate direction. It was still dark and we just run and old people lay on the ground to avoid being shot. (Pal Chol, Teacher in Lari High School, aged 43, Lari: 21/08/2017).*

Five villages in Lari were attacked on Friday, April 15, 2016. As Pal stated in the above quote, the raid and killing started at a place called Wuret around 5 A.M and around 7 A.M more than five villages were burned and looted by armed men from South Sudan. Mangok, Bulimkun, Lual, Chatyier and Kuanylualthoan Kebeles were the next villages raided by the attacker on Friday.

Marjiak Lok, an elder in Lari who survived the attack with a shot on his right hand, explained:

*I could not be able to run after I was shot in the hand. I had my gun, but they were shooting from different directions. I lay down in the bush and followed the direction of the gunfire. Soon I realize that they are too many. As they randomly shot to people, everyone was running to every direction. Murle never came to our village in this way. We knew them. This time is different. Some of them have military uniforms. But I also saw some with Korgang School uniforms [Violet shirt is the color of the Korgang High school uniform in Lari]. (Marjiak Lok, elder, age 62, Lari: 23/08/2017).*

The April 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 violent incidence is unique in its magnitude and level of damage. It receives lots of media coverage and attention from the Ethiopian Federal Government because of the magnitude and the damage it inflicted on the borderland communities. The official civilian death toll reached 208, including mothers and children. In addition to 80 casualties, 102 children were abducted and over 2,000 cattle were stolen on the day. The government put the blame on the Murle.

On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017, another incidence happened in Jor and Gog *Woreda* of Anywaa Zone which led to the death of 28 people and the abduction of 43 children<sup>24</sup>. Again the blame is on Murle. The Ethiopian authorities admit that more than 1000 armed Murle crossed the border into Ethiopia from Boma areas in South Sudan on the 15<sup>th</sup> and killed people and abduct children in Gambella region.

#### 5.4. Proliferation of Arms and Uncoordinated Disarmament along the Border

Armament and disarmament have often been mentioned when it comes to raiding, Murle and Lou Nuer. People in Lari claimed that their weapons have been taken by the government. For government officials, disarmament is indispensable in the region where the violent ethnic clash is a common phenomenon. In this section, I looked at how the borderland communities were disarmed and how the violence in South Sudan since the CPA has influenced the practice of disarmament Gambella and in Jonglei state

One of the most difficult tasks confronting South Sudan today, as a state in transition from long-existing civil war to peace, is disarming local armed groups and militias. The longest civil war in Southern Sudan was a very complex one that involves different armed actors. SPLM/A and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) were the main combatants but at the same time, there were a plethora of armed militias supported by the two main combatants and other neighboring countries. The White Army militias which were/are groupings of Lou Nuer armed civilians, mostly youth, and Popular Defence Force (PDF) of Murle led by David Yau Yau are notable and notorious armed groups during the civil war as well as active in Jonglei State today (de Costa, Diana Felix, 2012).

The active presence of these militias created a significant degree of instability in Jonglei and the Upper Nile States of post-independence South Sudan. They resist rounds of disarmament by SPLA since 2005 and they remain major security threats for the borderland communities in Gambella and a source of armament as well. Arnold and Alden (2007: 5-7) explained the reason for their resistance to disarmament in three ways.

<sup>24</sup><http://www.ahazetna.com/news/2017/03/ethiopia-reports-deadly-raid-gunmen-south-sudan-170315120515870.html> March 15, 2017.

<http://www.emuradio.com/3356-2/> Murle armed group attack Ethiopian civilian in Gambella . March 13, 2017.

The first reason for resistance has to do with lack of trust towards the disarming body. There are a strong fear and even hatred of SPLA. This case is apparent especially in Jonglei and the Upper Nile States where most of the White Army (mostly Nuer) is a resident. The Lou Nuer who formed the bulk of the White Army militia strongly resisted and well represented in another anti-SPLA actor in the South, South Sudanese Defense Force (SSDF) supported by Khartoum. According to Arnold and Alden (2007: 7), Lou Nuer are still very worried of SPLA because it was fighting against it for many years. Therefore, resistance to disarmament is caused by lack of trust to SPLA that claims the legitimate provider of it in the post-independence South Sudan.

The second factor has to do with protection and who should be disarmed first. Communities in Jonglei and the Upper Nile States worry about the need for self-protection. The communities in the area have a long history of raiding and counter-raiding and in the post-independence period, the trend is so tense that laying down arms would leave them exposed to attacks by neighbors. The Lou Nuer felt that to lose their weapons to an organization they did not trust (SPLA) would leave them defenseless in the middle of enemy neighbors (Murle) who still bear their arms.

The issue of livelihood and economic aspects of guns is the third factor for resisting disarmament. The communities dislike the very idea of being disarmed. The armed communities did not want to give them up since they are anxious about a peaceful future (Arnold and Alden, 2007: 11). The other factor for disliking being disarmed is associated with economic issues. The communities expect financial compensation for their weapons since these had been mostly acquired with their own resources in the form of cattle.

Historically, the Ethio-Sudanese border is proved to be porous and has been experiencing cross-border movements of people and army. Since the inception of the Sudanese civil war in the 1960s, the borderland people have been entangled in various levels of conflicts. Moreover, the presence and operation of armed movements in the area have also proliferated the availability of arms along the border. In the 1980s and 1990s, Gambella was a base for SPLM/A and the fall of the regime in Ethiopia in 1991 and the subsequent split of SPLM/A washed the region with armaments.

The recent disarmament in Gambella was conducted in 2005. Informants told the researcher again and again that they have been disarmed at the midst of heavily armed group like Murle and

Lou Nuer who successfully resisted the multiple rounds of disarmament in South Sudan. A cattle keeper in Pagak, claims

*Since the time they [Murle and Lou Nuer] heard our guns are taken, they attack our village day and night. They have their guns. But we gave our guns to the government in return for government protection. We are now unable to protect ourselves. (Gatluak Deng, Cattle Keeper in Pagak, age 24, Pagak: 22/08/2015).*

Jams Pal, a former regional police head, explained that there were two main necessities for disarming Ethiopian communities along the border with South Sudan in 2005 and 2006. One is an external factor with South Sudan. The disarmament in 2005 was conducted to make sure that all communities along the border are simultaneously disarmed (Jams Pal, former Regional Police Head, age 56, Gambella: 21/04/2016). This was because of the fact that with the signing of the peace agreement in South Sudan, disarmament was the first priority and hence in 2005 the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) and SPLA conducted disarmament in Gambella. Jams Pal further explained that SPLA was allowed to disarm pastoral communities into Ethiopian territories because of the seasonal movements of some pastoralist groups avoiding disarmament in South Sudan (Jams Pal, former Regional Police Head, aged 56, Gambella: 21/04/2016).

The second reason disarmament was found essential in Gambella region was, according to James Pal, due to the supply of weapons in the area during the second Sudanese civil war and particularly in the aftermath of the 2003 incident in the region<sup>25</sup>. Since the 1980s, Gambella region has been a battleground both for SPLM/A and other discontented Ethiopian regimes against the Derg. This left too many weapons in the region which makes the region volatile. Later on in the post-1991, due to the political differences between the Federal Ethiopian Government and Anuak armed groups in Gambella, armed violence and ambushes of highlanders since 2003 by Anuak gun-men necessitated the disarmament action (Jams Pal, former regional police head, aged 56, Gambella: 21/04/2016).

---

<sup>25</sup> In December 2003, there was a violent clash between the Highlanders allegedly supported by the Ethiopian national Defence Forces against the Anuak which led to more than 400 Deaths of Anuak in three days in Gambella and Itang.

Despite the plan to disarm the borderland communities at the same time, there have been the challenges of implementing disarmament on one side of the border simultaneously. As Tut Gatwech explained a lack of Ethiopian border patrol posts and lack of coordination between SPLA and ENDF in the disarmament programme remains challenging to conduct the programme on both sides of the border. For instance, one of the disarmament posts for the July 2006 exercise officially for the Akobo County in South Sudan was actually physically located in Gambella Akobo *Woreda* (Tut Gatwech, Deputy Region Police Office, aged 43, Gambella: 13/08/2015).

Disarmament should happen equally, at the same time along the border. So far the disarmament exercise in South Sudan was not successful and particularly the current violent armed struggle between the Government of South Sudan and SPLA-IO further washed the region with arms. Many informants claimed that they have been attacked by well-armed Murle and Lou Nuer while they were disarmed by Ethiopian authorities. A cattle-keeper stated that *"we have had much disarming by the government and all guns on our hands were collected and that is why we are vulnerable to armed raids"* (Loc Nen, Cattle keeper, age 22, Lari: 22/04/2016).

Lual Nguth, a cattle keeper in Fagak, also said:

*We ask the government many times to allow us to have our guns to protect ourselves and our cattle from raiders. Our guns were taken from us by our government. And we were told the government will protect us.* (Lual Nguth, cattle keeper, age 26, Fagak: 05/04/2016).

Disarmament should have been exercised simultaneously and thus risks of attack from another historically rival group would have been reduced. Yet, disarming one alone will obviously lead to the smuggling of arms into the communities indirectly. First, the communities in Gambella have been disarmed by the Ethiopian authorities. However, the pastoral communities around the border in Gambella need a weapon to protect themselves in the absence of government security in remote frontiers. Besides, these communities have been raided by Lou Nuer and Murle.

For instance, a statement by a cattle keeper in Lari showed that disarming borderland communities will have unintended consequences if the other side of the border is not equally disarmed or a strong militia is not provided for the disarmed borderland communities.

*The government assigned five militias for each Kebele to protect the villages. But Murle are large in number with better ammunition than our militias. Militias never stop Murle raiding and they never kill one. It is the Murle that*

*killed them. They just cannot defend themselves.* (Loc Nen, Cattle Keeper, age 22, Lari: 16/08/2015).

Moreover, when armed groups in Jonglei State hear that the Ethiopian side is disarmed, it becomes a blessing for them to raid the communities with an easy challenge. On the other hand, disarmed communities, which are not protected by the one who disarms them, will search for weapons to protect themselves and their cattle. Due to the various factors discussed above, it is easy to smuggle weapons thus easy access for the community. Hence, this makes government attempt to disarm the people in the area challenging. Weapons smuggled in and fall into the civilian hands is also used to intensify the local conflict and cattle looting.

Thok Luul, Akobo *Woreda* Chief, stated that people along the border exchange cattle with a gun to protect their cattle. An Ak-47 has exchanged for 5 to 7 cattle in Akobo. These led to the smuggling of weapons despite the disarmament attempt by the Ethiopian government in Gambella (Thok Luul, Akobo *Woreda* Chief, aged 49, Gambella: 29/04/2016). The researcher also observed that in Lari, many cattle keepers are always with their guns in cattle camps despite government disarmament efforts. Especially, the youth are the most armed one in these communities. And it is these youth who conducted cattle stealing to day in and around Lari. Yet the blame is always on Murle or Lou Nuer which makes the incidence unnoticed.

Furthermore, Gambella is believed to be the main source of arms smuggling to other parts of the country mainly in the highlands of Gore and Dembidolo areas . Reports at Gambella Region Security and Administrative Affairs Bureau showed that many guns have been confiscated in different times at Barokela checkpoint, the border between Oromia regional state and Gambella Regional State.

Generally, the conflict-prone nature of the frontiers and activities of armed groups in the area for so long washed the border areas with firearms. Supply of weapons by governments and arms smuggling combined with the absence of both ENDF and SPLA in the area further exacerbated the security situation to the borderland communities. Uncoordinated and lack of simultaneous disarmament attempts in the area leaves the borderland communities in constant patterns of raiding and counter-raiding.

## Chapter Six: Analysis

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research questions and it confronts the claim by literature on cattle-raiding. I juxtapose the literature on cattle-raiding with the findings of this study to draw a conclusion on the dynamics of cattle-raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan borderlands. The chapter links different discussions presented in chapter four and five to make sense out of it in line with the research questions and objectives of the study. Therefore, the chapter is presented in four sections to draw linkages across many factors related to the practice of cattle-raiding today along the Ethiopian South Sudan borderlands.

### 6.1. The cattle-raiding phenomenon and its relation to bride price payments in Lari

The discussion with informants about the need for more and more cattle is to get a first wife, second and third wives. People in Lari stated their desire for larger herds in general as to add to their status and enables them to marry (one or multiple wives). Cattle are used mainly to strengthen and support social ties within the communities, especially by getting married. Everyone I asked why they need or want more cattle, they responded with 'I would like to marry a wife and additional wives. People would like to marry more wives as these wives will give them more children and therefore, in the end, more cattle, especially when it concerns girls. By marrying one accumulates one's wealth and therefore also one's status and power. Marriage is a means to gain more wealth through children.

Despite the desire to have large herds of cattle, the size of herds in Lari are decreasing from time to time which manifests itself through the decline of the number of cattle fetched and paid for bride prices. People have also indicated the declining size of their herd. The micro-cattle census conducted in the village to see the patterns of bride price payments indicated that there has been a decline of bride price payments by 60 percent over a period of 20 years. I argued that the shrinking of the bride price payments over time explain the decline of cattle population among the communities. It is not controversial that the decline of cattle population is witnessed through changing patterns of average bride price fetched and paid among the Thiang Nuer clan in Lari over the course of time. It's possible to draw a correlation that bride price falls as cattle population falls.

When we come to the second correlation which is the cultural practice of bride price payments and cattle-raiding, informants were so suspicious to link the cultural practice of bride price payments with cattle-raiding. As presented in the discussion, informants prefer the term cattle stealing when they want to link it with putting all cattle together for bride price payments. Here, the preference of terms has to do with the scale and number of cattle involved and the actors behind the action. Cattle-raiding is a word my informant prefer to use in the discussion with other groups like Murle and Lou Nuer whose raids are by far violent and with more casualties than the stealing which is conducted by either another close Nuer clan or young members of the same clan or village.

Despite the preferences of words, the end result seems the same. People in Lari are relying on looted cattle to put their bride price payments together. I suggest there is a link between the cultural practice of the bride price and the occurrence of cattle stealing and raiding. I do not suggest that the bride price as such causes the raiding of cattle, but at least it explains the need for cattle. The bride price has to be paid in cattle which creates a significant need for cattle, and the necessary cattle can easily be obtained by means of stealing or raiding.

Of course, the fact that there is a need for cattle as a result of the bride price does not automatically imply that people that need cattle are also willing to steal and kill in order to obtain the cattle. But people resort to illegal markets where looted or raided cattle are available for sale. Moreover, this link has been denied. Nevertheless, some informants denying the link between raiding and bride-price payments, for me the link between cattle raiding or stealing and the need for cattle in order to pay the bride price became more and more clear while I was in Lari cattle market and around the illegal markets along the Lari and Pagak road.

But I have to admit that cattle stealing in Lari is not necessarily for bride-price payments. Informants indicated that there are some members of young Nuer who engaged in stealing mainly for money that will be spent on alcohol and tobacco. However, there are also people who raid cattle for a reason, for the accumulation of wealth by means of marriage. Marriage is an important institution among the Nuer. In the discussion about marriages in Nuer, we have seen that everything seems to be built around and focused on the marriage. Contrary to urban-based marriages in the highlands of Ethiopia, marriage among the Nuer is mainly functional and

economical; a marriage enables a man to produce children through his wife, these children are considered to be a source of wealth. Boys will offer wealth in the form of labor and girls will offer wealth in the form of cattle upon marriage.

The practices of raiding and counter-raiding and paying the bride price have always been part of Nuer society. These practices are not directly to be blamed for the insecurity as the inhabitants of borderland face nowadays. But the problem is the involvement of factors that have been outside of the pastoral setting. Herds have been diminished as a result of the civil war and are still diminishing as a result of the cattle raiding that takes place. The availability of weapons makes the raiding more violent. Moreover, the violent clashes along the border and the civil war on the other side of the border took away many male relatives (apart from cattle) which are a very important source of gaining cattle to get married (cattle to get married is often acquired through relatives as everyone contributes something). Therefore, with fewer cattle being available it is increasingly difficult to meet the bride price, which makes obtaining cattle by means of stealing or raiding more and more attractive.

## **6.2. Cross-border conflicts: Resource scarcity or Political Ecology?**

The alternative way of looking at cattle-raiding and violent conflict among pastoralist is provided by the two dominant views of resource scarcity and political ecology.

### **6.2.1. Resource scarcity:**

The central narrative of this model is that population growth leads to environmental degradation, increases the scarcity of the resources and eventually leads to (violent) conflict. It might seem the model applies to the conflicts that occur in Northeast Africa that has been experiencing environmental degradation. It is expected that water and pasture would be scarce in some arid places in Northeast Africa. But this does not mean all parts of the region suffer from the same problem. Moreover, according to the model, the conflict would be confined to these locations where there is a scarcity of water and pasture.

Nevertheless, the conflicts in Northeast Africa did not seem to occur only at locations where the cattle keepers gather with their cattle (as was assumed), but everywhere. Also, it had been assumed that the conflicts occur as a result of the congestion at a specific location and

consequently a lack of water and pasture in that area as many cattle keepers gather there with their cattle.

Gambella is one of the temperate areas in Ethiopia that have an average rainfall of 800mm. It is one of the regional states inhabited by a small number of population and the region is one of the scarcely populated areas in the country. Moreover, informants have neither argued that it is so much the congregation of people nor mentioned about the increase in population. What is mentioned, in contrast, is that there is enough water and pasture for all the cattle keepers and their cattle to be satisfied during the dry season in Gambella.

#### **Population pressure**

The issue of population pressure does not seem to be pressing for my informants. In fact, the literature on the migration of Jikany Nuer towards the east to Gambella has been caused by Lou Nuer expansion from Naxir, South Sudan. However, for informants in Lari, the issue of population pressure is not a concern at this time. In fact, informants feel that there is enough area to be filled by the Nuer in Gambella. In the discussion about resource scarcity, informants do not see a link between population growth and increasing resource scarcity. People in rural Nuer villages marry more than one wife and give birth too many children. However, this might not be the case in semi-urban areas like Lari and Gambella. The people in the towns have a different lifestyle that brings along certain costs and therefore they often chose to marry one wife and have few children in order to be able to offer them an education. This exactly matches what Markakis said, 'development is the best contraceptive' (Markakis, 1998: 12) in his discussion about the decline of fertility in places where development is visible.

However, in my stay in Pagak and Lari, I have also witnessed that people were suffering from a shortage of food and for a large part depending on food aid. Informants stated that they are unable to practice enough agriculture to feed themselves the whole year through. The reason for this is the insecurity caused by cattle raiding and cross-border conflicts. For that reason, they only plant close to their homesteads and do not go to cultivate their plots of land in the forest for fear of being attacked. The food shortage in Lari could therefore be mainly a security issue and population growth does not seem to be relevant.

## **Climate change**

The other point in resource scarcity debate is about climate change. Literature indicates that climate change is to be a threat to the availability of natural resources and therefore increasing conflicts caused by resource scarcity. Informants mention about the rain sometimes being late and sometimes flooding their area but the flooding has also provided enough water and pasture for the people as it did harm on their crops. However, climate change in terms of an increase in temperature as such is not experienced by the informants. Hence, I cannot argue here that climate change is putting extra pressure on the natural resources as it is unclear what to attribute to the changing precipitation patterns.

## **6.2.2. Political Ecology**

### **Access**

Access to grazing area and water points seems to be the most important element in cross-border relations between Jikany Nuer and Lou Nuer. Access to the grazing areas in Gambella is granted (or not) by the Jikany Nuer, who inhabited the most fertile parts of the region, to the Lou Nuer. The will of the Jikany Nuer to let Lou Nuer is often depending on the status of the relationship between the two. Even if a resource (water and pasture) is abundant in Gambella, it can become scarce to a certain group, like Lou Nuer in Jonglei state. Whether or not cattle keepers are able to get enough resources for their cattle depends on the access they are granted to the areas rather than the actual availability of these resources.

This brings us to the point that scarcity is more of a political and social issue rather than an ecological one. As Gausset and White (Gausset and White, 2005:20) refer to it the type of scarcity that the people in the borderlands are experiencing is 'political scarcity', not resource scarcity.

### **Two overlapping conflicts**

The conflict in Gambella has always been narrated as "ethnic" or "tribal" to the worst, by the national government at Addis Ababa and medias. In the same way, cross-border conflicts are generally labeled as such. However, the fact that there are ethnic differences among the different

groups along the borderlands is not the reason for the conflicts as such. As Mohamed Salih explained, in relation to the conflict between the Ngok Dinka and the Humr pastoralists in South Kordofan, conflicts are not 'isolated incidences of ethnic hostility' (Mohamed Salih, 1993:16). According to Mohamed, many more aspects are involved, such as the nature of the Sudanese state, regional inequality, Arab domination, colonialism, slave trade and also the national power structure (Mohamed Salih, 1993:16). Despite the fact that not all aspects of the features mentioned might not correspond with the situation of conflicts involving cattle, the experience in Gambella has a lot to share.

As presented in Chapter Five, the conflicts along the borderlands between Gambella region of Ethiopia and Jonglei state of South Sudan can roughly be split in two separate conflicts that are different in nature and involve different actors and are triggered by different issues. The conflict between the Jikany Nuer and the Lou Nuer has a feature which to a certain extent is related to the seasonal migration. The other conflict, between Jikany Nuer and Murle, is not directly related to the migration routes, but rather cattle-raiding and child abduction.

#### **Jikany Nuer versus Lou Nuer**

The conflict between the Jikany and Lou Nuer is much related to the seasonal migration of the latter towards the east where the former inhabits. The Lou Nuer migrate to the Ethiopian side of the border between December and May in search of water and pasture. Their seasonal migration is due to the scarcity of water and pasture in their areas where they have to share it with other groups like Dinka and Murle. But their seasonal arrival to Jikany inhabited areas is not always welcomed by the Jikany. The unwelcoming of the Jikany is considered as greed and the Lou feel that they are deprived of the resources which are abundant in Jikany inhabited areas. The case presented in Chapter Five about the conflict over fishing on Akobo river is an important incidence informant presented as the main causes of the problematic relations with the Lou Nuer.

In some circumstances, this deprivation is linked to earlier hostilities, ethnicity, and group imagination. Historical hostilities and politics have shaped the way conflicts are narrated. For instance, the Jikany Nuer feel that they have been killed by the Lou Nuer in an incidence called *Bor* and today's violence by the Lou is always narrated in line with historical hostilities.

The other important narrative that I have learned in my stay in Lari is the imagination of other groups (including Lou Nuer and Murle) as rivals, enemies, and adversaries. This is what Brown pointed out that groups 'tend to whitewash and glorify their own histories and they often demonize their neighbors, rivals and adversaries' (Brown, 2001: 218). This is an important narration in Lari today especially in cattle looting and raiding incidences where the other groups are always blamed for it.

### **Jikany Nuer versus Murle**

Murle are quite an influential actor in the conflicts in the borderland area. They do not share borders with the Jikany Nuer and do not come to Gambella as a seasonal migrant in search of water and pasture for their cattle. They come to raid cattle and abduct children.

The reports of the International Crisis Group (ICG, 2009) indicated that the many apparently tribal conflicts in Jonglei state do have a political character and political deprivation is mentioned as the main motivation for some recent rebel groups to mobilize themselves and rebel against the SPLA. George Athor and David Yau Yau are the two famous Murle rebel groups along the border areas and have been mentioned by informants as rebels that are active in Jonglei state. The literature (ICG, 2009; Riak Akuel, et.al, 2010; The Sudd Institute, 2012) showed that the Murle is among those groups that have received support from the northern government during the longest Sudanese civil war. Murle fought against the SPLA in their battle against the northern Sudanese government, and thereby automatically opposing the Nuer and Dinka in South Sudan. The government in Khartoum is often blamed for the tensions in the south, as they should try to divide the south by arming militia and rebel groups.

Apart from this historical narratives, informants in Lari often blame the raid of greed as greediness for cattle. Many stories and myths exist about the Murle and their love to cattle. The Murle are said to believe that all the cattle in the world belongs to them and their action of raiding is to reclaim them back. In addition to cattle, they abduct children to sell them for cattle to other Murle families as a result of their infertility associated with STDs.

Raiding of cattle and children is not uncommon in my field site. I have witnessed one raiding in Balinkun while I was in Lari that led to the abduction of two children and nine cattle in August

2015. Even though the abduction of children by the Murle might be true to some extent, it is also that people would like to put a blame on the Murle. In many cases, the attackers have not been identified and caught and therefore people assume it was done by Murle. The April 2016 attack, which was so devastating that got the attention of local as well as international media, showed that the attackers are not always Murle even though the blame goes to them.

### **6.3. New Types of raiding: Introduction of money and Market in Lari, revival of trade in the other side of the border and increasing number of marriages**

The literature in the 1970s explains the practice of cattle raiding as a system of redistribution of wealth among the communities. Cattle-raiding has always been taking place among pastoralists along the border between Ethiopia and South Sudan. This traditional type of raiding is not even referred to as the raiding people know nowadays, neither is it perceived as a crime as it was part of their culture.

Today's cattle raiding phenomenon along the borderlines are by no means to replenish Jikany Nuer cattle. Mburu's (Mburu, 2002) has explained the factors that have virtually transformed cattle rustling from a traditional practice to a highly organized crime. The primary element in his analysis is commercialization i.e. the cattle stolen are taken to urban centers where they are slaughtered and sold as beef. Only in rare cases, the cattle are used to restock a community whose resources got depleted. For Mburu, this new development has made cattle rustling a very profitable business, leading to commercialization of cattle.

The Nuer application of their term *Guit-guite* overtime indicated that there has been virtually a transformation from raiding for replenishing cattle to the new commercialization and illegal cattle markets in Lari. In the past, *Guit-guite* (a helpless young Nuer) raid to put all the bride prices at once for marriage. The application of this term today is used for those organized young Nuer who raids cattle for mainly illegal markets. Many factors are mentioned by informants for the transformation of raiding to more market-oriented and commercialized forms. The main factors mentioned are; introduction of Birr (money currency), increasing the number of marriages and developments across the other side of the border.

### **Introduction of Birr**

I am not suggesting that people in Lari have not used Birr as a currency before. People have been using it to buy household and food items that came from Gambella or other parts of the country. At the same time, Birr has been used to pay bride price payments among some members of the community. However, the arrival of the government bureaucracy in Nuer villages in the post-1991 political setting has transformed the availability of Birr and markets in Gambella. Many junior and high school young Nuer graduates got employment in the new government bureaucracies. The affirmative action and self-rule introduced according to ethnic criteria, make many Nuer salaried government employees. The rural village life with cattle became less attractive as many young Nuer go to school and government offices in towns and semi-urban areas.

The new Nuer educated class have to pay their bride prices in terms of Birr or have to buy cattle in the market with their Birr. With the expansion of government bureaucracies, schools and health facilities, NGOs, restaurants, and Hotels, markets begin to be opened to satisfy the demands of the new class and new arrivals from other parts of the country. The special importance here is the cattle market in Lari which provides cattle for people who need it for bride price payments and meat consumption.

The official Lari cattle market works parallel to other markets that are considered by government authorities as illegal. The road from Lari to Pagak is the place where the two markets function side by side. The illegal market, as informants explained, is facilitating raiding and looting which is targeted mainly for Birr and commercialization that bride price payments. A group of young Nuer has involved in the illicit looting and trade of cattle in many Nuer *Woredas*. The reports of the regional government also affirm that raiding has been conducted by people from the neighboring villages.

### **Post-CPA era and opening of markets along the Border**

There has been economic revivals and the opening of markets along the border between Gambella and Jonglei after the peace agreement signed between SPLM/A and the government of Sudan in 2005. Transportation by a motorboat that has been halted due to the war in the Sudan

was opened since 2008 and many traders have made a living. Cattle is one of the main trading items in Akobo. There are motor boats that transport large quantities of goods and people from Methar to Akobo.

From the Southern Sudanese side, the relative peace and the wealth-sharing arrangement of the CPA brought oil money into Southern Sudanese economy. There is literature that shows that the influx of oil money to the South Sudanese economy in the post-independence period has increased the demand for cattle and there are indications that the cost of marriage for young men has increased significantly (Sommers and Schwartz, 2011: 17). As discussed above, the demand for cattle has been on the rise due to the increasing number of marriages facilitated by the end of the civil war and the return of refugees from other countries like Kenya and Uganda.

Moreover, it has been noted that there are markets in Pibor not only for looted cattle but also for abducted children. The availability of a market for looted cattle in and around Pibor increases the violent cattle-raiding along the border. These raids are mainly associated with armed groups in the area operating as opposition for both Addis Ababa and Juba.

#### **Increasing number of marriages**

The end of the civil war in Southern Sudan brought relative peace in Jonglei, Upper Nile States and even in Gambella Regional State, though for short period of time until 2013. Border areas that have been military bases and battlegrounds begin to enjoy relative peace. Former soldiers and young members begin to return from war fields. Hoping for better future, these young former rebel soldiers look for partners to establish families. And others want to have additional wives. Yet there is a big challenge for former combatants in their wish to get their wife (wives).

A man stayed for a considerable time in a war-front will not have the means to pay for bride price. In addition, marriage has always been a concern for the extended family with the groom usually receiving assistance from his family and relatives when collecting cattle and cash for bride price. As many lost their parents during the war, this could have reduced their capacity to mobilize resources for marriage (Rolandsen and Breidlid, 2012: 54).

Moreover, as peace comes to the region refugees and internally displaced people begun to arrive at their area which increases the number of marriages. Refugees who have been in another

country like Kenya and Uganda and when they return home they come with money which increases the demand for cattle. For instance, in the data presented above, in Lari and Pagak areas, the highest number of marriages in the communities was recorded between 2008 and 2012. The increasing number of marriages creates an increasing demand for cattle that the supply side has to provide through either raiding or looting.

#### **6.4. Politics at play: Actors, gun, and regional political process**

Literature indicated that the changing nature of the practice of cattle-raiding can be explained as a result of the involvement of issues that have been external to the pastoralist communities. Here, the point is about the role and involvement of other actors and automatic weapons in the cultural practice of cattle-raiding among the pastoralist communities.

##### **Who are the actors in the new type of raiding?**

The discussion with informants so far has revealed that organized cattle raiding and child abduction are blamed on Lou Nuer and Murle even though no evidence has proved that. Various actors have involved in the new type of raiding. The conflict in Gambella has always been attributed to tribal violence and less important to the national governments at Addis Ababa. Basically, the conflict along the border between Ethiopia and South Sudan is becoming more violent, as the recent incidences showed. The violent conflict mainly revolves around cattle-raiding and involves different actors.

The Murle are quite an influential actor in the conflicts along the borderlands. Athor and David Yau Yau have been mentioned by respondents as rebels that are active in Jonglei state, and so much related to cattle-raiding. The Murle are often blamed for raiding. Today, youth in Lari used Murle as a scapegoat for their raid.

There are multiple armed movements along the border including the Anuak armed resistance (GPLM), Ethiopian Peoples Patriotic Front (EPPF) and OLF fighting against the government at Addis Ababa. The porous nature of the border is advantageous for these various groups to hide and organize subversive activities. They did not only participate in an ad-hoc manner. They conduct raids for profit and as part of their role in the complex conflict dynamics in Gambella region. With regard to conflict formation in the region, through sales of cattle in exchange for

weapons and ammunition, looted cattle is facilitating large-scale violence and contributed to the dynamics of conflict formation in Gambella.

#### **Proliferation of weapons and disarmament**

The longest civil war in the Sudan and the proxy war tradition in the Horn of Africa (mainly Ethiopia and Sudan) made automatic weapons available to the civilians and armed groups since 1980's, and the nature of the current conflicts along the border are so much shaped by these weapons. Before the onset of the North-South conflict in the Sudan, cattle raiding were waged with traditional sticks and spears, which limited the deadly impact of the raiding. Also, the raiding was bound by cultural rules and elders and chiefs were in charge and capable to foster peace between communities when raiding took place.

In line with the proliferation of weapons, informants argued that disarmament policies are executed in an unequal manner, and are influenced by the politics at national and regional level. Disarmament policies in Jonglei state have not been successful and Murle and Lou Nuer are still the most armed groups along the border. These unequal disarmament policies are responsible for a lot of casualties among the Ethiopian Jikany Nuer who have been disarmed through various phases of disarmament in Gambella. Informants claim that they have been disarmed by Ethiopian military but no protections were offered in time of the Murle attack.

Previously raiding took place within a certain set of rules that had to be respected, but the presence of automatic weapons undermines the authority of the elders and chiefs. The elders and chiefs are being replaced in their leadership by people that carry the guns.

## Summary and Conclusion

Explaining the dynamics of cattle-raiding along the Ethio-South Sudan borderlands was the central aim of this M.A. thesis. I looked at the relations between the cultural practices of bride price payments and cattle-raiding; the introduction of Birr and markets and cattle raiding; and the involvement of actors and automatic weapons and the patterns of cattle raiding in Lari, Gambella region of Ethiopia.

My first entry question to the fieldwork, why do you want more cattle in the first place, brought a whole debate that involved, the bride price. The payment of the bride price validates the marriage in the Nuer culture. When asked what people need cattle for 'I need cattle and more cattle to marry first wife, second and third wife'. Informants unanimously answer that the possession of cattle enables them to get married. Marriage is a means to accumulate their wealth and to increase their status.

The cultural practice of bride payments creates a need for cattle, which in many cases is difficult to meet for many people as a result of rising prices and diminishing herds. However, this need does not necessarily explain the conflicts as such. The fact that people need cattle for their bride price does not automatically imply that they are willing to steal and kill for that. It can be argued though that the combination of increasing number of marriages, the opening of markets and availability of cash, the proliferation of weapons and regional political processes are creating conditions that favor cattle raiding.

The increasing number of marriages in Lari is due to developments within Gambella and outside of the region. The introduction of government bureaucracies that created salaried jobs and cash flows to the region makes it easy for new semi-urban Nuer to marry with cash. The relative peace along the border due to the signing of the peace agreement in the Southern Sudan gave hope for many Nuer refugees and internally displaced to come back home and establish marriages. The opening of cross-border trades and the expansion of markets in Gambella and Lari further demanded more cattle.

The civil wars in Ethiopia and in the Sudan in the 1980s highly contributed for the availability of weapons in the region. subsequently, the civil war in the southern Sudan and the failed disarmament between 2006 and 2012 have washed the region with many weapons. This, in turn,

contributed to the severity of cattle raiding. The solution to this proliferation, disarmament, does not always seem to offer relief as it is often executed in an unequal manner which makes some groups (continuously disarmed) vulnerable to attacks from other groups (that have not been disarmed or avoid rounds of disarmament).

As a result of the availability of automatic weapons, cattle raiding is becoming more lethal and the scope is increasing which makes it impossible for chiefs and elders to settle the disputes between the tribes involved. They have to compete with the weapons for respect and authority. The conflicts are becoming more violent with huge casualties as April 15, 2016, attack in Lari showed.

In Lari, two types of conflicts overlap. The first one is between the two Nuer clans i.e. Jikany Nuer of Gambella and Lou Nuer of Jonglei. The conflict is associated with the seasonal migration of the Lou Nuer towards the east to Gambella in search of water and pasture for their cattle. This seasonal migration is an ancient-old habit and as such is not causing conflict between the two. However, some political and historical factors (Like the Bor incidence and fighting overfishing) altered the relationship between the Jikany and the Lou Nuer which is now involving cattle raiding.

The second conflict involves the Jikany Nuer and the Murle. The two groups do not share borders and Murle come to Jikany Nuer areas, not as seasonal migrants for water and pasture. They came anytime to raid and abduct children. Murle is known for its fearless actions of cattle raiding and abduction of children. It has been said that the Murle received support from the government of Sudan during the North-South conflict in order to create instability in South Sudan. Today, this group is one of the most armed groups along the border and informants claimed that the armed movement of the Murle is behind the attacks in Gambella.

Despite the fact that my study is located in Lari *Woreda* of Gambella, the issue of cattle-raiding and child abduction is not a problem limited to Gambella alone. It is related to the political processes at the regional level and in particular political processes in Juba and Addis Ababa. There are many armed groups operating along the porous border between the two countries. Some of these armed groups have political agendas whereas others are just bandits utilizing the insecurity situation in the lowlands who depend on cattle raiding for their survival.

Finally, the dynamics of cattle raiding along the Ethiopia and South Sudan borderlands have transformed over the past four decades. The traditional forms of raiding practiced for centuries to restock the herds, all within certain cultural rules and codes designed by elders and chiefs have given up to the new forms of raiding characterized by more deaths, more intense, more cattle taken at once, use of automatic weapons and breakdown of the social contract.

## References

- Abbink, Jon (2007) *Culture Slipping Away: Violence, Social Tension and Personal Drama in Suri Society, Southern Ethiopia*. In *The Practice of War: Production, Reproduction, and Communication of Armed Violence*. Berghahn Books.
- Agar, M.A. (1996). *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Allen, C. (1999). 'Warfare, Endemic Violence & State Collapse in Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, vol 81, pp 367-384.
- Arnold, Matthew and Chris Alden (2007). *"This Gun is our food": Demilitarizing the White Army Militia of South Sudan*. Working Paper. Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.
- Ayalew Gebre (2009). *Inter-group conflict, the role of pastoral youths and small arms proliferation in nomadic areas of Ethiopia: The Case of the Karrayu and their Neighbours in the Upper Awash Valley Region*, OSSREA.
- Baxter, P.T.W. (1993) 'The 'New' East African Pastoralist: An Overview' in J. Markakis, ed., *Conflict and the Decline of Pastoralism in the Horn of Afrika*, Institute of Social Studies.
- Berwick, S. (2004) *Sudan's Blood Memory: The Legacy of War, Ethnicity, and Slavery in Early South Sudan*, University of Rochester Press, Rochester, USA.
- Brown, M.E. (2001) 'Ethnic and Internal Conflicts – Causes and Implications', in C.A. Crocker (et al), eds., *Turbulent Peace, the Challenge of Managing International Conflict*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace, pp 209-226.
- Central Statistics Agency (2007). *The 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia. Results for Gambella Region*. Addis Ababa: FDRE Population Census Commission.
- Clifford, James and George Marcus (1986). *Writing Culture The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. University of California Press.

- Dereje Fyissa (2005). *Making Sense of the Conflict Situation in the Gambella Region in National Terms*. Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/S 2005.
- Dereje Fyissa (2011). *Playing Different Games: The Paradoxes of Anywaa and Nuer Identification Strategies in Gambella, Ethiopia*, Berghahn Books, Oxford.
- Eria Olowo Onyango (2010) *Pastoralists in Violent Defiance of the State. The case of the Karimojong in Northeastern Uganda*. Ph.D. thesis. The University of Bergen.
- Evans Pritchard, E. (1940). *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Evans Pritchard, E. (1940). *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fleisher, M. (1998) *Kuria Cattle Raiders: Vigilantism and Violence on the Tanzania/Kenya Frontier*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor (submitted).
- Fukui, K. & Markakis, J (1994) *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London & Athens: James Curry & Ohio University Press.
- Fukui, K., and Turton, D. (1979). Introduction. In Katsuyoshi, F., and Turton, D. (eds.), *Warfare Among East African Herders*. National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka.
- Gausset, Q and M. A. Whyte (2005) 'Introduction' in Q. Gausset, M.A. Whyte and T. Birch-Thomson, eds., *Beyond Territory and Scarcity – Exploring Conflicts over Natural Resource Management*, Uppsala.
- Gray, S. et al. (2003) "Cattle Raiding, Cultural Survival, and Adaptability of East African Pastoralists" *Current Anthropology*, vol. 44.
- Hendrickson, D, J Armon, and R Mearns. (1998). The changing nature of conflict and famine vulnerability: the case of livestock raiding in Turkana District, Kenya. *Disasters* 22 (3).
- Hendrickson, et al. (1998). The Changing Nature of Conflict and Famine Vulnerability: the case of livestock raiding in Turkana District, Kenya. *Disasters*, 22(3): 185-199.

- Huntingford, G. W. B. (1953). *The Nandi of Kenya: Tribal Control in a Pastoral Society*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Hutchinson, S. (1996) *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the state*: University of California Press.
- International Crisis Group (ICG) (2009b). *Jonglei's Tribal Conflicts: Countering Insecurity in South Sudan*. Africa Report No. 154.
- Johnson, Douglas H. (2003). *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*. Oxford University Press.
- Jok, Jok M. (2012). *Insecurity and Ethnic Violence in South Sudan: Existential Threats to the State?* Issue paper No.1 found at [www.suddinstitute.org](http://www.suddinstitute.org). Accessed on 27/01/2013.
- Lamphear, J (1998) *Brothers in arms: Military aspects of East African age-class systems in historical perspective*. In: Eisei Kurimoto & Simon Simonse (eds.), *Conflict, age, and power in North East Africa* (Oxford: James Currey).
- Lewis, B.A. (1972). *The Murle – Red Chiefs and Black Commoners*, Oxford University Press, edited by E.E. Evans-Pritchard, B.E.B. Fagg, D.F. Pocock and A. Mayer.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*.
- Markakis, John (2011). *Ethiopia: The last two Frontiers*. James Currey.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2004). *Pastoralism on the Margin*, Minority Rights Group International.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1998). *Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1993). *Conflict and the Decline of Pastoralism in the Horn of Afrika*, Institute of Social Studies, Basingstoke.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1990). *The Political Economy of Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, Survival Vol. 32.No. 5, pp. 403.

- Marshall Thomas, E. (1965). *Warrior Herdsmen*, Alfred A. Knopf, Fletcher & Son Ltd, Norwich.
- Mburu, N. (2002). Report on the proliferation of guns and rustling in Turkana districts: the case for appropriate disarmament strategies.
- Meeker, M.E. (1989). *The Pastoral Son and the Spirit of Patriarchy – Religion, Society, and Person among East African Stock Keepers*, edited by G. E. Marcus and J. Clifford, The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Michael Bollig and Matthias Österle (2007) 'We Turned our Enemies into Baboons': Warfare, Ritual, and Pastoral Identity among the Pokot of Northern Kenya. In *The Practice of War: Production, Reproduction, and Communication of Armed Violence*. Berghahn Books.
- Mossa Hamid Wassie (2014) *Conflict Dynamics in a Three-Level Game: the Conflict Formation in Gambella, South West Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa University online publication.
- Mohamed Salih, M.A. (1993) 'Pastoralists and the War in Southern Sudan: The Ngok Dinka/Humr Conflict in South Kordofan', in J. Markakis, ed., *Conflict and the Decline of Pastoralism in the Horn of Afrika*, Institute of Social Studies, pp 16 – 29.
- Prendergast, John (eds) (2012). "Dealing with Inter-Communal violence in South Sudan." in *Year One of a Nation*. e-International Relations. Found at: [www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/Sudan-publication.pdf](http://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/Sudan-publication.pdf). Accessed on 19/12/2012.
- Raot, Aparna et al (2011) *The Practice of War: Production, Reproduction, and Communication of Armed Violence*. Berghahn Books.
- Raymond C. Kelly (2005). *The Nuer Conquest: Tribal imperialism*. In Dereje Feyissa *Making sense of the Conflict Situation in the Gambella Region in National Terms*, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/S 2005.
- Regassa Bayissa (2010). *War and Peace in the Sudan and Its Impact on Ethiopia: The Case of Gambella 1955-2008*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.
- Risk Akwei (et al) (2010). *Child Abduction in Jonglei and the Central Equatoria States*. Rift Valley Institute, South Sudan.

- Riak Akwei (et.al)(2010). *Child Abduction in Jonglei and the Central Equatoria States*. Rift Valley Institute, South Sudan.
- Rolandson H, Breidlid Marie(2012). A Critical Analysis of Cultural Explanations for the Violence in Jonglei State, South Sudan. *The African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)*. Found at: [http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/TSN/142827/ichaptersection\\_singledocument/0a5c7d77-3432-4abb-9a44-a0c3bfd450bf/en/ch\\_7.pdf](http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/TSN/142827/ichaptersection_singledocument/0a5c7d77-3432-4abb-9a44-a0c3bfd450bf/en/ch_7.pdf). Accessed on 09/02/2016.
- Russell, Bernard (2006). *Research Methods in Anthropology. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Fourth Edition. AltaMira Press.
- Schenual, Stephen et.al (1999). *Essential Ethnographic Methods. Observation, Interviews, and questionnaire*. AltaMira Press.
- Simala, K.I and Amotabili, M. (2005), 'Small Arms, Cattle Raiding, and Borderlands – The Hemi Triangle', in W. van Schendel and I. Abraham, eds., *Illicit Flows and Criminal Things – States, Borders and the Other Side of Globalization*'.
- Skoggard, Ian and Teferi Abate Adem (2012) *From Raiders to Rustlers: The Filial Disaffection of a Turkana Age-set*. Human Relations Area Files. Yale University.
- Sommers, M. and Swartz S. (2011). *Dowry and Divisions: youth and State Building in South Sudan*. United States Institute of Peace.
- Spencer, P. (1973). *Nomads in Alliance: Symbiosis and Growth Among the Rendille and Samburu of Kenya*. Oxford University Press, London.
- Strauss L. Anselm and Juliet M. Corbin (1998). *Basics of Qualitative research: Grounded Theory. Procedures and Techniques*. London: Sage Publications.
- Sweet, L. E. (1965a). Camel-raiding of North Arabian Bedouin: A mechanism of ecological adaptation. *American Anthropologist* 67(5): 1132-1150.
- The Sudd Institute (2012). *Insecurity and Ethnic Violence in South Sudan: Existential Threats to the State?* Issue paper No.1 found at [www.suddinstitute.org](http://www.suddinstitute.org). Accessed on 27/01/2013.

- Trochim, William M.K. (2006). *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. Atomic Dog; New York.
- Turton, D. (1994). 'Mursi Political Identity and Warfare: The Survival of an Idea.' In Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis (eds.), *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London: James Currey.
- Wheeler, S. (2009) *Writers, Writing on Conflicts and Wars in Africa*, edited by O. Ndibe and C. Hove, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala.
- Whitehead, Tony L. (2004). *What is Ethnography? Methodological, Ontological, and Epistemological Attributes*. *Ethnographically Informed Community And Cultural Assessment Research System working paper series*.
- Yin, Robert K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage Publications.
- Young John (2007). *Armed groups Along Sudan's Eastern frontier: An Overview and Analysis*. *Small Arms Survey*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1999). 'Along Ethiopia's Western Frontier: Gambella and Benishangul in Transition', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37(2).

## Annexes

### Annex I. In-depth interview in Pagak

s.no	Informant's name	Date of interview	Occupation/position	Age	Sex
IN01	Nyakong Bol	21/08/2015	Elementary school teacher	33	F
IN02	Ruach Lal	21/08/2015	Cattle keeper	19	M
IN03	Gatluak Deng	22/08/2015	Cattle keeper	24	M
IN04	Gatwech Ruach	23/08/2015	Former village chief	56	M
IN05	Thok Nbiol	23/08/2015	NGO staff	34	M
IN06	Bidit Riang	23/08/2015	Elder	68	M
IN07	Dak Paot	24/08/2015	Policeman	41	M
IN08	Gatkuoth Reath	02/04/2016	Elementary school teacher	28	M
IN09	Tut Ruez	02/04/2016	Former village chief	59	M
IN10	Pal Kang	03/04/2016	Militia	44	M
IN11	Gonger Yuel	03/04/2016	Elementary school teacher	31	M
IN12	Dolek Tang	03/04/2016	Elder	71	M
IN13	Nyahok Pal	05/04/2016	Housewife	53	F
IN14	Lual Nguth	05/04/2016	Cattle keeper	26	M

IN15	Nyahaak Nen	09/04/2016	Policewoman	37	F
IN16	Pihual Ter	09/04/2016	Militia	33	M
IN17	Nyantut Rok	11/04/2016	Schoolgirl	17	F
IN18	Nyadaot Chot	11/04/2016	Housewife	36	F
IN19	Hana Mar	12/04/2016	Schoolgirl	19	F
IN20	Chudser Chol	12/04/2016	Housewife	29	F
IN21	Daoth Rok	13/04/2016	Cattle keeper	15	M

## Annex II. In-depth interview in Lari

s.no	Informant's name	Date of interview	Occupation/position	Age	Sex
IN22	Loc Nen	22/04/2016	Cattle keeper	22	M
IN23	Marjiak Mar	22/04/2016	Businessman	46	M
IN24	Deng Tut	23/04/2016	Village leader	57	M
IN25	Paot Gogner	24/04/2016	Elder	73	M
IN26	Ruei Lok	24/04/2016	Militia	29	M
IN27	Aynaem Tufa	25/04/2016	Highlander Businessman	38	M
IN28	Ruach Lul	25/04/2016	Elder	69	M
IN29	Pal Yuel	26/04/2016	Village leader	57	M
IN30	Walang Paot	27/04/2016	Housewife	41	F
IN31	Pal Chol	27/08/2017	Lari High school teacher	43	M
IN32	Marjiak Lok	23/08/2017	Elder	62	M
IN33	Tut Chan	23/08/2017	Elder	69	M
IN34	Majiak Chol	25/08/2017	<i>Qeret Sebsabi</i>	26	M

Annex III. Short interviews with *Woreda* officials in Lari

no	Informant's name	Date of interview	Position in the <i>Woreda</i>	Age	Sex
IN35	Chuol Bol	16/08/2015	Deputy <i>Woreda</i> admin.	42	M
IN36	Hoth Nyon	17/08/2015	<i>Woreda</i> security head	35	M
IN37	Kang Thok	18/08/2015	<i>Woreda</i> police officer	31	M
IN38	Nyanchal Mar	24/04/2016	<i>Woreda</i> agriculture office	27	F
IN39	Gathuak Pal	25/04/2016	<i>Woreda</i> prison administrator	33	M
IN40	Reath Lung	27/04/2016	<i>Woreda</i> finance office	26	M
IN41	Hoth Nyon	24/08/2017	<i>Woreda</i> security head	37	M

Annex IV. Short interviews with regional government officials in Gambella

s.no	Informant's name	Date of interview	Position in regional government	Age	Sex
IN42	Keak Chot	10/08/2015	Deputy, Security & Administration Affairs Bureau	48	M
IN43	Pal Bidit	11/08/2015	Officer, Finance & economic bureau	34	M
IN44	Hol Hol	12/08/2015	Regional security advisor to president	31	M
IN45	Tut Gatwech	13/08/2015	Deputy region police officer	43	M
IN46	Thok Luul	15/08/2015	Akobo <i>Woreda</i> chief	49	M
IN47	Tang Dolek	17/04/2016	Police officer	29	M
IN48	Douth Tang	18/04/2016	Police officer	33	M
IN49	Pibual Chot	20/04/2016	Officer, Security & Administration Affairs Bureau	40	M
IN50	Jems Pal	21/04/2016	Former regional police head	56	M
IN51	Thok Luul	29/04/2016	Akobo <i>Woreda</i> chief	49	M

### Checklists for key informant interviews

**Introduction:** I am a graduate student of social anthropology at Addis Ababa University. As part of a partial fulfillment of the graduate program, I am conducting research on the dynamics of cattle-raiding along the border between Gambella Region of Ethiopia and Jonglei State of South Sudan. You are a resident of this area and I kindly ask you to cooperate in answering my question regarding cattle-raiding in your area. The answers you provided are used only for this research/academic purposes and I assure you the confidentiality of the information you provided. The information you provided will be kept anonymous. I am thankful in advance for your time in giving answers to the following questions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Town/Village \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### I. Personal Data

1. Tribe/clan \_\_\_\_\_
2. Occupation (s) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age \_\_\_\_\_
4. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
5. Marital Status : Single  Married  Widowed  Divorced

#### II. Livelihood

6. What is your primary livelihood?  
Pastoralism  Farming  Both  Other
7. What is your secondary livelihood?  
Trade  Government  Labor  Other
8. If your livelihood consists of livestock, prioritize the type according to the amount (1 for most, 2 for more, 3 for less and 4 for least).  
Cattle \_\_\_\_\_ Goats \_\_\_\_\_ Sheep \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the major challenge in taking care of the livestock? Prioritize according to importance (1 for very important, 2 for important, 3 for fair, 4 for less important, 5 for least important).

Water \_\_\_\_\_ Grazing land \_\_\_\_\_ Cattle-raiding \_\_\_\_\_ Diseases \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### III. Water/pasture access and conflict

10. What is your source of water for your livestock? Prioritize according to importance ( 1 for most important, 2 for important, 3 for fair, 4 for less important and 5 for least important).

Borehole \_\_\_\_\_ River \_\_\_\_\_ Rainwater \_\_\_\_\_ Well \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. If you go elsewhere to look for water/pasture in the dry season, which route do you regularly use?

Via Itang  Via Lari  Via Jikaw  Via Akobo  Other

12. Why do you regularly use the above route? Please choose the most important.

It has more water and grazing land

It is closer to the village

It is more secure/no conflict

Clan relations/relatives

Other

13. Which month do you leave your village for water/pasture? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Which month do you return to your village? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you experience any problem along the route as you travel to water/pasture points?

Yes

No

16. If your answer is Yes to question no. 15, specify the problem and explain the reason for the problem/conflict?

---

---

---

17. Have you ever lost cattle during and along the migration period?

Yes

No

18. If your answer to question no. 17 is yes, please specify how many, when and by whom?

---

---

---

19. Have you been able to recover some or all of your cattle?

Yes

No

20. If your answer to question 19 is Yes, how did you recover them?

---

#### **IV. Cattle-raiding/Child abduction and Bride price**

21. Since when is cattle-raiding practiced in your area?

---

22. Why people practice cattle-raiding in this area?

---

23. Where does the cattle-raiding takes place most in this area?

---

24. When does the cattle-raiding takes place most in this area?

---

25. Who do you think is raiding this area most of the time?

---

26. Have you ever lost cattle due to cattle-raiding?

Yes

No

27. If your answer to no. 26 is yes, please specify when, how many and by whom you were raided?

---

---

---

28. Have you ever able to recover your lost cattle?

Yes

No

29. If your answer to question no. 28 is Yes, please indicate where and how you recover the lost cattle.

---

---

---

30. How do you explain the magnitude of raiding in the past five year? Please prioritize the magnitude.

Highly increasing

Decreasing

No change

Decreasing

Highly decreasing

31. What do you think are the factors for the change of the magnitude of cattle-raiding in your area?

---

---

---

32. Do you think cattle-raiding is related to the payment of bride prices?

Yes

No

33. If your answer to question no. 30 is yes, explain how it is related?

---

---

34. What do you think is the relations between cattle-raiding and child abduction?

---

---

35. Since when does child abduction is practiced in this area?

---

36. Who do you think abduct children in this area and why?

---

---

37. Have you ever lost a child due to child abduction?

Yes

No

38. If your answer to question no. 37 is Yes, explain how and where you recover your lost child/children?

---

---

### Checklists for Micro-Cattle Census

**Introduction:** I am a graduate student of social anthropology at Addis Ababa University. As part of a partial fulfillment of the graduate program, I am conducting research on the dynamics of cattle-raiding along the border between Gambella Region of Ethiopia and Jonglei State of South Sudan. You are selected to fill the following data because you are head of your household and I kindly ask you to cooperate in answering my question regarding payment of bride price. The answers you provided are used only for this research/academic purposes and I assure you the confidentiality of the information you provided. The information you provided will be kept anonymous. I am thankful in advance for your time in giving answers to the following questions.

Name of the household head \_\_\_\_\_ Town/Village \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### V. Personal Data

39. Tribe/clan \_\_\_\_\_

40. Occupation (s) \_\_\_\_\_

41. Age \_\_\_\_\_

42. Sex \_\_\_\_\_

#### VI. Household survey data

1. How many wife(s) you married? Please indicate the number of wife(s), name of the wife (s), year of marriage(s) and bride price paid in cattle.

Wife(s) in order	Name of wife(s)	Year married	Number of cattle paid	Remark
1 <sup>st</sup> wife				
2 <sup>nd</sup> wife				
3 <sup>rd</sup> wife				
4 <sup>th</sup> wife				
5 <sup>th</sup> wife				

2. If you have married son(s), please indicate a number of a son(s), a number of his wife(s), year of marriage(s) and a number of cattle paid.

Married son(s) in order	number of wife(s)	Year married	Number of cattle paid	Remark
1 <sup>st</sup> son				
2 <sup>nd</sup> son				
3 <sup>rd</sup> son				
4 <sup>th</sup> son				
5 <sup>th</sup> son				
6 <sup>th</sup> son				
7 <sup>th</sup> son				

3. If you have married daughter(s), please indicate a number of a daughter(s), year of marriage(s) and a number of cattle fetched.

Married daughter(s) in order	number of husband(s)	Year married	Number of cattle fetched	Remark
1 <sup>st</sup> daughter				
2 <sup>nd</sup> daughter				
3 <sup>rd</sup> daughter				
4 <sup>th</sup> daughter				
5 <sup>th</sup> daughter				
6 <sup>th</sup> daughter				
7 <sup>th</sup> daughter				

4. Have you ever lost any cattle over the past ten years?

Yes

No

5. If your answer to question no. 4 is Yes, explain the cause for the loss of cattle?

---



---

### **Declaration**

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_