Resolution of Agro-Pastoral Conflicts through Community Based Actors in Nakuru County, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper discusses the rationale for involvement of multiple stakeholders or actors in addressing agro-pastoral conflicts. To be able to understand the rationale, the study identified the resources at the center of agro-pastoral conflicts, identified key stakeholders to be involved in resolving the agro-pastoral conflicts and why they should be involved in resolving the conflicts and also sought to establish the mechanisms that can be adopted to ensure sustainable peace. The study used a structured questionnaire, in-depth interview schedule and an observation schedule to collect data. A standardized questionnaire was administered to selected household respondents while in-depth interviews were conducted with the teachers, religious leaders, elders and local government administrators. The data collected was analyzed descriptively using frequency tables. The findings show that there are specific resources at the center of the agropastoral conflicts; there are multiple stakeholders that are important in resolving the conflicts and that a multipronged approach will be necessary in addressing the agro-pastoral conflicts in Nakuru County.

Index terms— agro-pastoral conflicts, conflict resolutions, resources.

1 Introduction

atural resources have been at the center of most conflicts in Africa in general and Kenya to be specific. These resources related conflicts have often been experienced in formerly Coast province with Rift Valley remaining the epicenter of resource related conflicts (Ayiemba et al 2000). In Rift Valley, conflicts over resources have been experienced between the Agikuyu versus the Kalenjin in Uasin Gishu, and Bomet Counties and Agikuyu versus the Maasai in Nakuru County. In addition, similar resource related conflicts were experienced in Laikipia County pitting the Maasai against the large-scale ranchers. Resource related conflicts among the agro-pastoral communities have often revolved around ownership, management and various social institutions and local capacities. This study set out to describe the justification for engaging local structures in addressing agro-pastoral conflicts.

2 II.

3 A Note on Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey rather than a follow-up study due to time constraints. Cross sectional survey is a research design that is aimed at determining the characteristics of a defined population at a given point in time. Information presented in this paper originates from various sources namely; scheduled interviews, dialogue with key informants, the researcher's field observation and secondary information from existing literature.

4 III.

5 Results and Discussions

This section discusses the findings based on identification of the resources at the center agro-pastoral conflicts, the justification for engaging multiple actors in resolving the conflicts. In addition, the section presents the mechanisms for consideration in providing long terms solution to the agro-pastoral conflicts.

6 a) Resources at the Centre of the Agro-Pastoral Conflicts

There are a number of reasons that could explain agro-pastoral conflicts in the study area. The respondents identified sources of the agro-pastoral conflicts in the area. Figure 1 shows the resources that the respondents identified to be source of agro-pastoral conflicts in Nakuru County. The respondents reported that land ownership and use, water access and livestock theft were the sources of the agro-pastoral conflicts. From the study it came out strongly that land ownership and use is the main source of the agro-pastoral conflicts that affected Nakuru County in the year 2005. This can be seen from Figure 1, which indicates that 185 (88.9%) respondents reported land ownership and use as the source of the conflicts. This could be attributed to the struggle for ownership and economic use of the land in the study area. The Agikuyu, on one hand, claim ownership through buying and subsequent acquisition of title deeds and government settlement program in the post independent period. The Agikuyu further argued that they bought the land when the white settlers left the country after Kenya gained independence in 1963. The Maasai claim, was based on the pre-colonial or historical ownership of the disputed land. The Maasai argued that they acquired the land before colonialist came and evicted them. In addition, this emphatic identification of land as the source of conflicts could be attributed to the different economic systems of the two communities in dispute and the need for the same resource for different uses. While the Agikuyu require the land for farming, the Maasai require it for grazing. These economic systems are incompatible in the sense that the Maasai would want to graze their animals in their "historical heritage" while the Agikuyu would want to farm in the land that constitutionally belong to them through "purchase". These findings are in agreement with the findings of (In studying agro pastoral conflicts in Adamawa Cameroon, Gausset et al **??**2005) established that pastoralists feel that they have a right to graze their cattle anywhere as long as the cattle do not damage the crops. To the pastoralists, nobody owns pasture. In his study of environmental scarcity in Rwanda, Homer-Dixon (1994) identified scarcity of agricultural lands, forests, water and fish as environmental problems that contribute to violence. The findings further concur with **??**uckles (1999) and Kenyatta (1938) when they noted that conflicts over natural resources such as land, water and forests are ubiquitous. Gausset et al **??**2005) explained the sources of the conflicts as resulting from conflicting perceptions and use of the same resource. He explained that while grassland is the main source of pastoralism, it is potential agricultural land for the agriculturalist. Secondly, while movement of cattle is an integral part of transhumance, it threatens the success of agriculture. The finding also affirms Yamano and Deininger (2005) findings in which he noted that land is increasingly becoming a source of conflicts in Sub Saharan region. The 6.7 percent that attributed the conflicts to water could be explained in terms of the perception that water is not be owned by anyone and therefore its usage is subject to how much one can use. While river Ewaso Kedong was cited as the source of the clashes, it is far from the study area. Although the two communities used the water for domestic purposes, they also depended on it for economic gains. The Maasai required water for their animals while the Agikuyu required it for irrigation. The Maasai argued that the Agikuyu blocked the water to irrigate their farms denying their animals water downstream. Lastly, 4.3 percent that identified livestock theft as a root source of the conflicts could be attributed to the Agikuyu who argued that the Maasai stole their animals during the night and also drove away their few livestock in the process of grazing in their area. The Maasai are perceived to steal livestock of their neighbors as means of increasing their stock and a sign of social identity. Similar findings were observed by Brock-Utne (2001) in his study of Kidepo Valley. He noted that cattle's rustling was a common source of conflicts in Kidepo Valley. In a study of conflicts in Northern Kenya, Pkalya et al (2003), established that competition over control and use, scarce grazing lands and water was a source of pastoral conflicts in the Northern Kenya.

7 Resources people conflict over

From the above discussion, we conclude that agro-pastoral conflicts can seldom be explained in terms of single sources. Agro-pastoral conflicts are always characterized by multiple causes and there call for engagement with multiple stakeholders.

8 b) Awareness of Agro-Pastoral Conflicts and their Resolution

The study sought to establish whether the agropastoral communities were aware of the existence of the conflicts and whether the conflicts have been resolved. The study established that out of the 211 respondents, 98.6% were aware of the agro pastoral conflicts. The study further sought to find out whether the agropastoral conflicts have been resolved or not.

In order to understand whether the conflicts have been resolved or not, the study conceived conflict resolution as the removal of all underlying causes and the settlement of disputes between individuals or groups of people through solutions that refrain from violence and that attempt to reunify and re-harmonize the people involved

in the conflicts or an attempt to preserve an amicable relations. Table 1, shows the views of the respondents on whether the conflicts have been resolved or not. 1 show that conflicts have not been resolved according to the respondents. It can be observed that 87 percent of the respondents indicated that the conflicts have not been resolved while 13 percent did not know whether the conflicts have been indicated that police patrols have increased since the conflict erupted. (ii) Some of the participants felt that there still existence of tension, hatred suspicion, mistrust and insincerity between the two communities. (iii) The sources of the conflict have not been addressed. The sources of the conflict were identified as land ownership and use, access to water resources and livestock. (iv) There has been no dialogue or any forum for the two communities that is the Maasai and Agikuyu to meet and discuss the conflict so as to resolve the conflicts once and for all. (v) The conflict has not been resolved because of perceived partisanship and laxity of the government. This can be attributed to the Maasai who feel that the government is pro-Agikuyu and this is why "their own" were shot by the police who came to restore order. On the other hand the Agikuyu feel that the government took too long to respond even though there were indications of an imminent attack. (vi) The conflicts have not been resolved because the perpetrators have not been punished. The Agikuyu feel that those who burnt their houses, destroyed there stores and other property have not been charged in a court of law. Similarly, the Maasai feel that the people who provoked them by blocking the river have not been taken to court for doing so at the expense of their livelihood. (vii) Lost and destroyed properties have not been compensated. This can be attributed to the Agikuyu who argue that they lost so much during the conflict including lives and property and this has not been compensated hence no one can argue that the conflict have been resolved. From the discussion above, it is clear the communities are not satisfied by the current state of affairs. There is need for more structured engagement of the communities in conflict and also seek ways of building consensus on the issues that divide the communities with a view to resolving the conflicts.

9 c) Key Players in Conflict Resolution

From the findings above, it is clear that the conflicts have not been resolved. It was therefore necessary to establish who should play a key role in resolving the agro-pastoral conflicts and why. Table 2 shows the key actors who should be involved in resolving the intermittent agro pastoral conflicts in Nakuru County. (Source: Field data)

Table 2 shows that most (67.3 percent) respondents considered the government to be a major player in resolving the agro-pastoral conflict. This could be attributed to the fact that the issues at the center of the conflict that is, land, water and livestock theft can adequately be dealt with by the government. For instance, land question can only be resolved through a policy decision. The choice of community leaders and elders by 21.2 percent of the respondents could be attributed to the respect and influence the elders have on the community especially among the Maasai community.

To resolve the conflicts, the study established that the government, community leaders and elders, the community members and resource owners and the church leaders should play a key role in resolving the conflicts. This confirms the findings of CCR (2003) report that argued that conflict resolutions is the duty and a concern of multiple actors and cannot be delegated to an individual or a single institution.

10 d) Reasons for Involvement of Different Players in Conflict Resolution

From the findings, it is clear there are multiple sources of agro-pastoral conflicts. This multiplicity of sources requires multiple actors to be able deal with. The study therefore sought to find out the justification for involving each of the stakeholders identified as key players in addressing the conflicts.

11 e) Reasons why Church Leaders Should Play a Key Role

Table 2 indicated that 5.3 percent of the respondents preferred the church leaders to play a key role in resolving the agro-pastoral conflicts. The preference for the church leaders could be attributed to the fact that most (91.9%) of the respondents were Christians with only 8.1% who did not identify with any religion. The following are the reasons they gave for their preference. They have experience and wisdom on conflict resolution. This can explained in terms of the process that is involved in one being considered an elder. One has to be of a certain age and must have interacted with the elders as a learner to be able to acquire the necessary experience and wisdom (Apollos 2008).

They have the trust of the community. The trust that the community had on the elders can be attributed to the process of conflict resolution in the past. The process was open and transparent with the community being present when decisions are arrived. Their decisions were driven by consensus hence the saying "where there are elders, there will be no problem", since problems or conflicts are resolved (Apollos 2010).

They have an influence and respect of the community. This argument is based on the fact that, among the Maasai, it is the elders that have the final say on community concerns. In addition, among the Agikiyu, elders command respect. The elders are considered to have respect based on past deeds that are of benefit to the

community and therefore community listens to them. Similarly, the elders have networks beyond the community boundaries.

According to Apollos (2010), institution of elders is the most important social and political structure among the Agikuyu. The council of elders (Kiama) had both political and judicial functions whose main aim was peace and harmony.

The involvement of elders is in agreement with **??**ratli and Swift (1999) findings. The authors argue that elders have authority that is drawn from the fact that they control access to resources, have cross-ethnic networks and a supernatural legitimacy. In addition, experience has shown that systems consistent with community protocols and principles of natural justice have greater relevance to indigenous communities. also notes that among the Agikuyu and the Samburu, there were councils of elders that resolved conflicts of whatever nature. The elders were also considered arbitrators among the Agikuyu community (Kenyatta, 1938). The role of the opinion leaders and council of elders in conflict resolution is crucial (Brock-Utne, 2001). Brock-Utne notes that elders are respected, trusted and have gained authoritative influence through wisdom and experience.

12   g) Reasons Why Government Should Play a Key Role

There were 66.8 percent of the respondents who felt that the government should play a central role in resolving the agro-pastoral conflict. The following are the reasons why the government should play a key role in resolving the conflicts:

The government has structures and resources to enforce law and order. This can be attributed to the fact that the respondents are aware that the constitution gives the government authority over land distribution and allocations. This explains why the government through the post independent resettlement program, it was able to resettle those who were displaced by the colonial administration. In addition, before one by acquires land, he/she must go through the government agencies. The government also has law enforcement agencies such as the police, judiciary that can ensure that government directives are adhered to. This concurs with article 114 and article 115 that grants the government authority over land.

The respondents also felt that the government has the mandate and authority granted by the people. This can be attributed to the fact that every five years, there is an election in which the government seeks mandate of the people to rule. The people then relinquish their authority to the elected through the vote.

They are closer to the people. The respondents felt that through the provincial administration that is spread to every part of the country. There is the D.Os, chief and the Assistant chiefs who are always with the people and therefore should be able to understand the problems of the people.

The involvement of the government in resolving the conflicts is in agreement with Obi (1999). In analyzing the role of the state in the population conflict nexus Obi (1999), noted that the state is an authoritative allocator of scarce resources and also a mediator in the conflicts over resources.

13   h) Reasons Why Community and Resource Owners

Should Play a Key Role Approximately 6.2 percent of the respondents reported that the community and resource owners should be key players in resolving agro-pastoral conflicts. The following are the reasons they gave why the community and resource owners should be the key players in resolving the conflicts.

One of the reasons was that they are the ones affected and involved in agro-pastoral conflicts. During the conflicts, it is the community that looses lives, cattle and their property is destroyed. The respondents also felt that the community and the resource owners understand the nature and causes of the conflicts.

14   i) Sustainable Resolution of the Resource-Based Conflicts

The respondents indicated that the following if implemented would ensure sustainable peaceful coexistence: (i) The community elders and leaders should meet to discuss and resolve the conflict. This was reported by 43.3 percent of the respondents. This affirms the respects and faith the community or the respondents have on the community leaders and elders' ability to resolve the conflict. (ii) A total of 1.9 percent of the respondents also recommended that political incitement should be stop. This can be attributed to the feeling by some respondents that politics played a role in the conflicts. (iii) There were 7.7 percent of the respondents indicated that there is need for peace education and sensitization. This is considered important in bring about behavior change among the conflicting groups. This findings are supported by Mekenkamp et al (1998) who noted that the local capacities need to be strengthened through education and training in the community. (iv) The respondents also recommended that the government should solve the land problem in Longonot location and the country at large. The 10.1% who reported this can be attributed to the role of the government in land adjudication and distribution. It can also be attributed to the fact that all policy decisions are made by the government. (v) Some (18.3%) of the respondents indicated that the land demarcations and boundaries should be made clear. (vi) There were 6.7 percent of the respondents who reported that the parties to the conflict should respect private property. (vii) A total of 11.1 percent of the respondents reported that the government should beef up security and ensure the rule of law. (viii)Some of the respondents recommended that the Maasai should be provided with alternative water sources. This group constituted 1.0 percent of the respondents. Table 3 below summarizes the

suggestions given by the respondent on how the conflicts should be resolves by the source of the conflict. (Source: Field data)

An examination of Table 3 shows that the respondents believe that dialogue is the most important avenue through which the conflict can be resolved. This is coming out clearly based on the suggestion by 90 (43.3%) of the 208 respondents. They suggested that community leaders and elders from both the communities meet and discuss and resolve the conflict. Similarly it is coming out strongly that the problem of land ownership and use can be resolved by government enforcing the rule of law, creation of clear land boundaries, government solving land problem and community leaders and elders meeting and resolving the conflict. Livestock theft as a source of conflict can be solved through dialogue between community leaders and elders and government enforcing the rule of law. Similarly, peace education and a meeting of community leaders and elders should be able to resolve the problem of water access as indicated by 14.3 percent and 64.3 percent respectively.

IV.

15 Conclusion

From the above, the study contends that the conflicts that were experienced in Longonot Location have not been resolved. Similarly, the study concludes that to resolve the resource-based conflicts, the question of land ownership and use, water access and livestock theft must be addressed. In addition, to deal with these sources of conflicts, the government should play a leading role as it has the responsibility of resource distribution, access and protection. The involvement of the community leaders and elders, the communities and resource owners will also be crucial in ensuring sustainable peace is achieved. [1]

Figure 1:

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Conflict resolved	Frequency	Percent
No	181	87
Don't know	27	13
Total	208	100.0
(Source: Field data)		
Table		

Figure 2: Table 1 :

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Key players	Frequency	Percent
Government	140	67.3
Community leaders and elders	44	21.2
Communities and resource owners	13	6.3
Church/religious leaders	11	5.3
Total	211	100.0

Figure 3: Table 2 :

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Suggestions for conflict resolution	Sources of the conflict			Total
	Land ownership and use	Livestock theft	Water access	
Community leaders and elders to meet discuss and resolve	78	3	9	90
	42.2%	33.3%	64.3%	43.3%
Stop political incitement	4	0	0	4
	2.2%	.0%	.0%	1.9%
Peace education and sensitization	14	0	2	16
	7.6%	.0%	14.3%	7.7%
Government to solve land problem	21	0	0	21
	11.4%	.0%	.0%	10.1%
Create clear land demarcations and boundaries	33	3	2	38
	17.8%	33.3%	14.3%	18.3%
Respect private properties	13	1	0	14
	7.0%	11.1%	.0%	6.7%
Government to enforce rule of law and beef up security	20	2	1	23
	10.8%	22.2%	7.1%	11.1%
Provide alternative sources of water for the Maasai	2	0	0	2
	1.1%	.0%	.0%	1.0%
	185	9	14	208

Figure 4: Table 3 :

Year 2015 resolved or not. The 87 percent attributed their response to the following: (i) There is nothing that has been done except police presence in the study area. The respondents

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