

**THE LAND QUESTION IN RELATION
TO INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN LAIKIPIA COUNTY
1850-2022**

Bradley Barasa Namunyu

School of Arts and Social sciences
Department of Social Science Education
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology,
Kakamega - Kenya.

P.O BOX 737, 50200 BUNGOMA, KENYA

Email address: bradbarasa@yahoo.com

Phone Number: +254708792769

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2621-6609>

Abstract

In light of modernism, institutional land reforms and new governance structures, land was still a factor in the manifestation of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kenya and beyond. There was need therefore to research why land triggered inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County. The research question was how has the land question influenced inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County 1850-2022? Instrumentalism and articulation of modes of production theories were used to give the theoretical framework of this research article. It adopted the historical research design and data was analyzed thematically to ensure validity and reliability. It established and concluded that ancestral land claims, colonialism, changes in land use and land tenure, geo-politics, ethnocentrism and government resettlement programme led to the rise of the land question which triggered inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County 1850-2022. The research article recommended that; ancestral land claims and historical land injustices should be addressed.

Keywords: Conflict, Inter-Ethnic, Laikipia County, Land question.

Introduction

In a widened interpretation, this research article assessed the influence of the land question on inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County. This assessment was holistically on the basis of ethnic identity and social interactions exacerbated by a multitude of factors. The factors included

marginalisation through historical land injustices like the Maasai cause, institutional insufficiencies in fixing historical land claims and humanitarian factors like rising population, land use and land tenure in Laikipia County (Mwenda, 2018).

The nature of inter-ethnic land conflicts in Laikipia County was also influenced by mind-sets of legitimacy on account of primordial human settlements and perceptions of rights to protect threatened natural resources. Beneath these causal factors, was an element of high level of illiteracy and lack of conscious efforts to include actors and general stakeholders into sustainable mitigation programmes tailored to end the perennial culture of inter-ethnic land conflicts in Laikipia County (Warurii, 2015).

Historically, land generated inter-ethnic conflicts on the basis of ethnic identities globally (Khamala, 2009). In Sri-Lanka ethnic Tamil and Tamil have engaged in land related inter-ethnic conflicts resulting from colonialism and post-colonial government resettlements policies. These land issues have survived for ages despite government interventions and policy shifts (Ranathilaka, 2014, p. 177). In Africa, the essentiality of land as a force of production since the pre-capitalist era defined the formation inter-ethnic relations (Nasimiyu, 1984:62). Colonialism had a huge impact in augmenting the land question and its effect in the expression of inter-ethnic conflicts in Africa. The Nkonya and Alavanyo in Ghana endured inter-ethnic land related conflicts arising from the pre-colonial ethnic settlements, exacerbated by colonialism and escalated during the post-colonial era. Government inability to fix the ancestral land claims between the Nkonya and Alavanyo resulted into an age-old ethno-territorial conflicts (Asamoah, 2014). Conflict actors have manipulated ethnic identities in the expression of land related conflicts in these heterogeneous societies. Cultural identities like language, beliefs, origin and migration were exploited to rally ethnic groups against each other for socio-political and economic expediency (Imbuye, 2016). In Laikipia County colonialism, human migrations, changes in land tenure and land use in addition to government land policies contributed to the land related inter-ethnic conflicts (Warurii, 2015).

This research article therefore studied how geo-politics, proliferation of small arms and lights weapons, changes in land use, rising population, cultural aspects like moranism, pastoralism and cattle rusting, media and inadequate land reforms policy influenced the land question and in the expression of inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County.

Research Question

The research question of this research article was; how has the land question influenced inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County 1850-2022?

Research Design

This article explored the historical research design in studying how the land question influenced inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County 1850-2022 (Debashis, 2012). The selected research design was suitable to this research article given the generated data was thematically interpreted on the basis of this articles research question (Carr, 1967).

Research Theories

This research article relied on the instrumentalism and articulation of modes of production theories in hypothesizing the land question influenced inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County 1850-2022 (Imbuye, 2016, pp. 15-57; Banaji, 1990, p. 300).

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to analyse data on the basis of the research article question (Kothari, 2004).

Findings and Discussions

The land question was ethno-territorial contests among the Pokot, Tugen, Samburu, Ndorobo, Maasai, Kisii, Meru, Somali, Agikuyu and the Europeans peopling Laikipia County in Kenya. This research article explored how geo-politics, changes in land use and tenure, cultural aspects like moranism and inadequate land reforms policy influenced the land question and in the expression of inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County 1850-2024.

Political dynamics

Resource distribution across the country had a ramification on the intensity of presidential competition (Murugu *et.al* 2002). The general presumption was that whoever takes over the presidency had the

advantage of benefiting his or her ethnic group at the expense of others. This was aggravated by system of unequal distribution of natural resources including land and becomes the genesis of inter-ethnic land conflicts in Kenya. Ethnic clashes in Laikipia County took a political twist in 1990's, violence that broke out before the general elections were meant to displace the ethnic Agikuyu and other Bantu communities who visibly supported the opposition political outfits (Warurii, 2015:71). From the preceding findings, this research article found that the Agikuyu were targeted on their ethnic lines to displace their land holding rights in Laikipia County. This was because land in Laikipia County was a critical force of production for both cereal agriculturalist and crop farmers.

Political competition was about winning political power in order to be in position to control land in Laikipia County which was an agrarian capitalist society. As a result, Bantu were largely aligned to the opposition politics while the pastoralist Nilotes subscribed to the Kenyan African National Union ideologies led by Daniel Arap Moi the second president of Kenya (Drought, Violence and politics inside Laikipia's cattle war, *International crisis group*, 20th July 2022). This study upheld that the ethnic groups in Laikipia County supported different political parties on ethnic lines. The expectation was that the parties in question if they won political power would protect their land holding rights in Laikipia County. Land holding rights were politicised in Laikipia County because land was a factor of production in their agrarian modes of production. From the foregoing discussion, this research article espoused that politicians weaponised land along the ethnic lines because land was a factor of production for both crop farmers and herders in Laikipia County. Politicians took advantage of limited pasture and historical land issues for political capital. They incited herders to illegally graze on private lands or drive their livestock into ranches and conservancies. They invoked underlying land issues that remained unresolved as a rallying call for the herder's lawlessness in Laikipia County. This pattern has been predictable and consistent every election cycle in Laikipia County. Mwenda expounded on this by stating that the last decade saw a flare up of inter-ethnic conflicts before and after the electioneering period. Politicians had the tendency of devising propaganda as campaign strategy to scare away perceived

opponents from certain ethnic groups. The strategy also included weaponization of land by evoking ancestral land claims and historical land injustices for political expediency (Mwenda, 2018:46). This research article maintained that the Maasai, Pokot, Tugen, Ogiek, Samburu, Ndorobo and Turkana were mobilised along their ethnic lines by conflict actors to evict the Agikuyu, Kisii and Meru because land was their factor of production as grazing field in their pastoralism modes of production.

Politicians lied to communities that evictions will expand their grazing territories – former Rift Valley Regional coordinator George Natembeya (Macharia, 2021). This research article established that certain politicians were set to grab the land once evictions were successful. Cattle that illegally grazed on ranches and conservancies did not belong to the herders. These cattle were spotted being driven out of conservancies and ranches to Samburu, Isiolo and Baringo. This was because they wanted to exploit land as a factor of production in Laikipia County for their personal enterprise.

Some politicians notoriously propagated ethnic profiling and practically fanned ethnic hate in order to sway the voting patterns to achieve a selfish interest (Nyamu, 2010: 156). This research article supported that most of the inter-ethnic conflicts experienced in Laikipia in the present and in the past stemmed from the activities of these crops of political leaders. They fashioned stolen ethnic land narrative as their hidden card to rise to power against a certain perceived constituency within their electoral area. They pointed out cleavages created after years of land marginalisation and isolation of their ethnic groups to whip emotions to win political capital. However, their vested interests ultimately served them at the expense of their general ethnic groups. There were certain incidences where voters of a certain ethnic group were coerced to vote the certain way, by use of threats. This was especially so if those ethnic groups were perceived as aliens who impinged on the host ethnic groups land.

These politicians acted in cohort with other ethnic elites in rallying their ethnic groups along ethnic lines. In most cases, elites were depicted as educated, informed and strategists but in some cases were decision

makers who did not possess those attributes (Hamilton *et.al*, 2004: 15). This research article upheld that they funded inter-ethnic conflicts with the view of reclaiming land in Laikipia County as their factor of production. This was executed by manipulating ethnic groups' identities like language, symbols, beliefs, traditional oathing rituals to trigger inter-ethnic clashes.

The constitutional process of delimitation of electoral units ended up stroking negative ethnicity and inter-ethnic land conflicts (Hamilton *et.al*, 2004: 15). This was done through creation of political instigated ethnic boundaries that ended up reinforcing deep seated psychological factors of us against them. An exception was noted in urban areas even though ethnicity still reigned supreme in such areas. Laikipia West and East constituencies were dominated by ethnic Agikuyu elected leaders. Herders claimed that these constituencies were created ostensibly to politically protect the ethnic Agikuyu land holding in Laikipia County. This research article held that the creation and revision of political boundaries in Laikipia County was manipulated by conflict actors as an ethno-territorial justification of land holding rights. This was because land was a force of production for both herders and crop farmers in Laikipia County. Conflicts actors manipulated ancestral land claims and historical land claims to incite land related conflicts on the basis of ethnic identities. Ethnic identities became points of rallying ethnic groups together in their quests to fights for their land holding rights as a force of production.

Ethnicisation of politics in Kenya resulted into the creation of ethnic power barons or cartels among the political class. These leaders rule with impunity surprisingly with the express authority from their electorates. They oversaw destruction of institutions and deprived their own people fundamental liberty including socio-economic inclusion. Courtesy of this system of ethnic patronage, runaway corruption and impunity, these leaders served endless terms by weaponising historical land issues and negative ethnicity by hoodwinking and exploiting uninformed electorates. This research article, thus, held that there were exceptional cases of politicians helping members of their ethnic groups to acquire land. However, such efforts were taken advantage by other politicians to create political narratives for political capital. Land was

politicised by politicians across the political divide because it was a force of production for both herders and crop farmers (Warurii, 2015:15-85).

Land buy-out policy

The commercial acquisition of land by the agriculturalist the ethnic Bantu on the brink of independence and later on was the root cause of pastoralist agitation and expression of inter-ethnic conflicts in the County (Warurii, 2015:60). The pastoralist claimed that both the colonial and post-colonial governments disposed of their ancestral land to the highest bidder to their detriment. Endemic inter-ethnic land conflicts expressed in Laikipia County emanates from this deep rooted fact and that is handed down from one generation to another. Pastoralist communities who were the indigenous ethnic groups' hold that they lost their land to the ethnic Bantu groups through the land buy out policy adopted by the post-colonial government in Kenya after independence. From the preceding discussion, this study held that the land buy out policy adopted by both the colonial and post-colonial government fashioned the land question in Laikipia County along the ethnic lines. Therefore, it created an ethnic wedge of identity between the Bantu ethnic groups that bought land in Laikipia and the pastoralist ethnic' groups that missed out leading to the perpetual inter-ethnic conflict expressed in the County. This led to the Maasai, Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, Ogiek, Ndorobo, Agikuyu, Meru and Kisii to rally along their ethnic identities to fight for their land holding rights in Laikipia County. This was because land was a factor of production in Laikipia County for all those ethnic groups.

As a reactionary move, perpetually pastoralist graze illegally and squat on absentee land lords farms as a form of protesting historical injustices meted on them (Warurii, 2015:60). It was also instructive to note that those who were unable to acquire land in Laikipia through the land buying policy arrangement were rendered landless. It was this historical bitterness and feeling of marginalization that explains violent scenes of inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County. President Daniel Moi and Mwai Kibaki's regimes tried to solve the land problem in Laikipia County through issuance of title deeds to the landless but mostly the beneficiaries were internally displaced persons. It is against this

backdrop that this study held that the land buy out policy influenced inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County. The ethnic groups that were disadvantaged from their land holding rights in Laikipia County through the land buy out policy vented out their frustration through land related inter-ethnic conflicts. They rallied along their ethnic identities like language; age set systems and traditional oathing rituals in the manifestation of land generated inter-ethnic conflicts.

Land use

The changes in land use in Laikipia County from the traditional grazing to ranching, conservancies, settler farming, crop farming and urbanisation over time led to inter-ethnic land conflicts. The most contemporary land use issue in Laikipia County was the fact that ranches and conservancies consume more than half of land in Laikipia while the local ethnic communities were left with about thirty percent of the land mass to share. This study therefore avowed that periodic pastoralist invasion of the ranches was a form of venting out bitterness resulting from historical land injustices against them by both the colonial and post-colonial regimes in Kenya. It was also because they were denied to exploit land in Laikipia County which was their factor of production. They resorted to lawlessness as a desperate measure after years of aborted legal redress and general consensus besides series of the underlying realities and concerns. Statistically, large-scale ranchers owned half of the land mass in Laikipia County. In total, Laikipia County had forty-three ranches covering half of the county's land area. About thirty of these ranches belonged to companies and individuals ostensibly for tourism and beef farming. About thirteen belonged to group ranches in Laikipia North (Mwenda, 2018:53). Most of the land lords in Laikipia were Europeans. They have farmed in this area for years. However, some of the land lords acquired land recently after they settled in the area from Europe and United States of America (Buke, 2017). However, on the contrary County government official argued that ranches acted as a buffer zone between warring ethnic groups. They allowed neighbouring communities to access water and control illegal grazing. From the preceding this research article held that changes in land tenure led to the expression of land related inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County. The adoption of private and developed denied herders grazing fields denying them land which was their factor of production in

their modes of production. They were therefore forced to rally along their ethnic identities to fight for their land holding rights in Laikipia County. Land was at the centre of the 2022 pastoralists' invasion of the private farms, ranches and conservancies in Laikipia North, Laikipia Central, Laikipia West and Kirima (*Drought, Violence and politics inside Laikipia's cattle war*, International crisis group, 20th July 2022). This research article held that the local ethnic groups mainly the Samburu and Maasai claimed that this was their ancestral land, which has since been occupied by Europeans and rich individuals owning conservancies, ranches and commercial plantations.

Ilemi triangle, small arms and light weapons in Laikipia County

Inter-ethnic land conflicts in Laikipia County were largely inflamed by the prevalent peddling of illicit fire arms in the area (Warurii, 2015:92). The origin of these small arms and light weapons was contradicted but the multiple sources theory points to Sudan and Kenya police service (KPS) and the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF). The Kenyan security apparatus aided and abetted proliferations of these illicit firearms through colluding with criminals ferrying these weapons at the border points, on police road blocks or were compromised to trade their ammunitions for material gain (Warurii, 2015:90). This study established the inability by the security apparatus to stop peddling of firearms escalated inter-ethnic conflicts. Conflict actors acquired these arms to arm their ethnic groups during their attacks and counter-attacks. Thus, this research article maintained that proliferation of small arms and light weapons led to the escalation of inter-ethnic conflicts. The Ilemi triangle on the border of Kenya and Sudan was pointed as a major source of these fire arms. The intrigues of Ilemi triangle ensured constant armament of the Turkana who perpetually fight the Dassanetch and Toposa in Kapoeta East County of the Republic of South Sudan. The triangle was contested between Kenya and Sudan and both countries are yet to agree on the official borderline around this triangle. Weaponization of ethnic Turkana Dassanetch and Toposa was a strategy by both Kenya and Sudan to protect the territory integrity against intrusion (Kamau, 2023:25).

Ilemi was part of Kenya since the colonial days but was represented on the map with dotted lines. However, the Moi regime in 1988 instructed

cartographers to substitute dotted line with a straight line. This research article established that this proposition was opposed vehemently by the republic of Sudan which was then including the territory of South Sudan. Even though, then this Ilemi region was under the leadership of the rebels. In February 1989, the government of Sudan accused Kenya of attempting to grab 6,220 square kilometer of their territory in a reactionary move, Robert Ouko the foreign Minister then reiterated that Ilemi triangle was in Kenya. This degenerated into a diplomatic row leading to the recalling of the Sudanese envoy back to Khartoum. The position of Sudan government was adamant; they insisted that their boundary in the Elemei region followed the East-west line ratified in 1914 by the British colonial agents of Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. The Elemei triangle covers the Loitikipi plain on the west and the open plain on the east. It also covered the entire Lokwama Moru Range. Arguably, these are good grazing grounds and fertile areas for pastoralist contest. By 1947, Elemei area had seven police posts under the King's Africans Rifles, they were there literally to protect the Turkana after a deal between Kenya and Sudan was brokered in 1928 (Kamau, 2023:25). This research article, thus, held that the armament of the ethnic Turkana to fight the Dassenetch and Toposa in Sudan contributed to the inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County as these weapons were proliferated to Laikipia County.

Besides the Ilemi triangle, the socio-economic significance attached to cattle among the pastoralists' communities became the point of proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the dry land rangelands. After severe drought that often caused cattle fatalities, the herding communities in the dry land rangelands were compelled by circumstance to carry out raids to replenish the shortfalls. These resultant trends arose from an entrenched socio-economic culture that largely relied on the livestock and its products. Raids were only fruitful with continual availability of adequate weapons (Kamau, 2023:25). Illicit peddling of small arms and light weapons posed a threat to the general global stability (Mwale, 2009:211). This study held that this was made possible through sophisticated technology in addition to the appetite by governments and multi-international companies to procure and make small and light arms weapons. Pastoralists were heavily armed with small arms and light weapons which they easily acquired from the

troubled northern Kenya (Mwenda, 2018:51). This research article avowed that peddling and access to these rifles complicated and negated multi security agencies efforts in conflicts interventions in these land related inter-ethnic conflicts. Criminals gangs were in most cases more armed than the security enforcement officers deployed to pacify the region. The gun culture among the Turkana stretched from the pre-colonial ivory trade at the height of slave trade in the region. The Turkana acquired arms from the trading with ivory during these pre-colonial indigenous commercial networks.

Communities which were armed by the government since independence to police the border still held these weapons. This study affirmed that through this policy mistake a gun culture was created in 1960' and a whole generation has grown up with guns. Most scholars agree that the inter-ethnic violence accelerated during and after the electoral cycle and soon after circumcision rites during even years (Kamau, 2023:25). Consequently, this research article affirmed that the British armed the Turkana to fight the Italian expansion into Kenya during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1930. Efforts by the British to disarm the Turkana after they started launching attacks on the defenseless Pokot and Marakwet bore little fruits. Upon independence the entire Northern Kenya did not have a police Station. The Jomo Kenyatta regime in 1970's conceived a policy to enlist Kenya police reservist in all border districts including northern Kenya. The Pokot for the first time got an opportunity to own guns through this programme (Kamau, 2023:25). Idi Amini had started a military base at Soroti allegedly to extend the Ugandan border to Naivasha. Upon his overthrow, the Pokot dashed to the house and made away with all arms. It was projected that the base had fifteen thousand guns and two million pounds of ammunitions. Pokot progressively became heavily armed. These arms included Ak47 assault rifle, the World War II Hecker and Koch G-3 army rifles. A triangle of endless gun fights was entrenched among the Turkana Pokot and Karamajong.

In 1984, operation Nyundo was launched by President Daniel Moi under the commandship of General Joseph Nkaiseri (Kamau, 2023:25). Despite the Gunman Carnage and massive loss of property involved in what came to be known as Lotiriri massacre, the brutal operation did not

succeed to solve the arms problem. Since 1980s a gun trade flourished in the northern Kenya with Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia as the main theatres of this illegal trading network. Guns were mostly traded with Cattle, for one bull you sell you get rifles. Gun buying Centres were common in northern areas of Loima hills and Ilemi triangle where gun merchant traded their wares in open. The disarmament of Turkana and Pokot was also cautiously executed because of the volatile nature of the region. If they disarmed the Turkana and Pokot they exposed them to an easy attack from the Toposa and Jie in the region. Also, several efforts to disarm the Pokot and Turkana were insignificant because they re-acquired the firearms from the gun black market in Sudan from 1980's to date (Kamau, 2023:25). This research article held that ethnic groups in Laikipia County rallied along their ethnic identities to acquire firearms to defend their land holding rights in Laikipia County. Land to them was a critical factor of production in their crop farming and pastoralism modes of production. Aspects of ethnic identities like language, beliefs, age set systems, traditional oathing rituals, origin, migration and settlement were manipulated by conflict actors. They manipulated in order to acquire fire arms in the expression of land related inter-ethnic conflicts.

Rising population

Another twist to the perennial land squabbles in Laikipia County was the ever-changing trends in human demographics (Mwenda, 2018:42). The population was subsequently rising overstretching the ability of the available land in Laikipia to accommodate the resultant population. The rising human population in Laikipia overstretched the limit of available resources and food security. Limited resources including land, becomes the points of competition for its access as a matter of survival. This also explains violent inter-ethnic outbursts and systematic patterns where herders invade ranches, conservancies and private land for the small holding crop farmers (Mwenda, 2018:43). This research article, thus, affirmed that ethnic groups were mobilised in Laikipia County along ethnic identities to violently clash over land use due to the rising population. This was because more than half of the land was used as conservancies, ranches and private land. The Pokot, Samburu, Maasai and Turkana rallied along their ethnic identities to defend their land

holding rights. Land to them was a factor of production as grazing land in their pastoralism modes of production.

Colonialism

The Pokot, Maasai, Samburu, Ndorobo and Ogiek form the bulk of the original indigenous groups that were unfairly dispossessed land in Laikipia County by the colonial authorities. They developed a culture of invading conservancies, ranches and private land as a protest move to vent out their historical grievances that span for decades. Pastoralist strongly believed that ranches, conservancies and private land existed to the detriment of their livestock. Upon independence most of the white settlers left the white highlands which Laikipia was part. Most of the pastoralists expected to regain their ancestral land as an inalienable right on the basis of the pre-colonial land holding policy. However, politics and vested interests would characterise the Jomo Kenyatta regime resulting into a skewed land redistributions and distribution policy that ended up benefiting certain ethnic groups at the expense of the pastoralist in Laikipia County (Mwenda, 2018:23-56). Initially, these disgruntled ethnic groups did not protest this deliberate marginalization and irregular land allocation in the guise of settlement programmes. But over time diminishing grazing fields and acute shortage of water for the livestock ignited their pursuit to reclaim what is presumed their ancestral land. The ethnic Pokot, Maasai, Samburu, Ndorobo and Ogiek were mobilised along ethnic identities to invade ranches and private farms as a form of venting out historical land injustices (Warurii 2015:12-45). This research article acknowledged that the Pokot, Maasai, Samburu, Ndorobo and Ogiek were rallied along their ethnic lines in the manifestation of land related inter-ethnic conflicts. Aspects of ethnic identities like language, age sets systems, origin, migration and settlement were manipulated by conflicts actors in their fight to reclaim their ancestral land which was unfairly alienated by the colonial regime. Land for grazing was their factor of production in their pastoralism economic substructure.

The Maasai Cause

Not so long after the Maasai had been successfully moved to the Loita in the southern reserve, out of discomfort in the southern reserve did they lodge petitions against this move expressing their desire to return to

Laikipia plateau (Mwenda, 2018:80). As earlier noted in 1913, the Maasai through Ole Njogo and others petitioned the Attorney General and the East African protectorate against unfair alienation of their land in Laikipia plateau. Nevertheless, this law suit was ruled against their favour on technical grounds arising from the import of 1904 and 1911 Anglo-Maasai land concessions. The Maasai historically sought several legal redresses in attempts to express their displeasure through the legal avenues. However, these spirited attempts often flopped in the corridors of Justice. In 1932, they also presented their grievances to the Cater Commission of inquiry into land but their concerns were never addressed. During the second Lancaster House Conference the British-Maasai agreement was discussed but the Maasai interests were never conclusively agreed (Mwenda, 2018:78). In 2004, the Maasai uprising in Laikipia was informed by the 1904 Maasai-British agreement that alienated their ancestral land in Laikipia. Backed by the pressure groups, the Maasai staged a protest. They called for compensation among other raft of demands. The government responded by deploying security forces which acted with brutality. However, as an effect of community land act of 2016, the Maasai group ranches have been given community land to manage in Laikipia North. Thus this research article affirmed that the Maasai were rallied on their ethnic identity to take up arms to fight for their ancestral land in Laikipia County. Aspects of Maasai ethnic identities like age set systems; language, origin, migration and settlement were manipulated by conflict actors in the expression of inter-ethnic conflicts. Land for the Maasai was a factor of production in their modes of production.

Conclusion

This ethnicisation of politics was based on ethnocentrism and the desire to acquire political protection for land holding rights. This proposition led to land related inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County. Politicians invoked underlying land issues created during the colonial era and escalated during the post-colonial dispensation that remain unresolved as a rallying call for the herder's lawlessness and agitation toward cereal agriculturalist. Politicians weaponise land as their political card to rise to power by inciting ethnic groups in Laikipia County. They manipulated cleavages generated after years of land marginalisation and isolation of

their ethnic groups to whip emotions to win political capital. The pastoralist accused both the colonial and post-colonial governments for disposing off their ancestral land to the highest bidder to their disadvantage on the brink of independence and long after. This mobilisation along ethnic identities by the Samburu, Maasai, Pokot, Ogiek and Ndorobo to violently protest the commercialisation of their ancestral land was on the basis of historical land claims, geo-politics, changes in land use and skewed post-colonial land settlement programmes.

Recommendation

This research article recommended that ancestral land claims by the Maasai, Samburu, Pokot, Ndorobo and Tugen should be addressed. Both the county and national governments should give community land to the Maasai, Samburu, Pokot, Ndorobo and Tugen. Commercial land holding rights by the Agikuyu, Meru and Kisii should be protected by the county and national governments. Weaponization of land on ethnic basis for political expediency should be censored by the electoral agency and national government. Proliferation of firearms should be checked by the national security agencies by collaborating with local communities.

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