Conflict, Environmental Security and Governance, Among Pastoralists in Kenya: A Case Study of the Turkana Community

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree to any other University.

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ABSTRACT

This study is about the links between conflict, environmental security and governance among pastoralists in Kenya and particularly the Turkana community. It investigates the theoretical and practical linkages between conflict, environmental security and governance, interrogates the nature and form of the relationships among these variables including the effect on pastoralists’ livelihood and establishes the significance the normative and institutional frameworks on the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and environmental insecurity within the context of governance deficit. It is anchored within the modified Thomas Homer-Dixon’s environmental scarcity theory. The theory which is expressed in terms of reductions in the relative availability of renewable natural resources aptly captures the issues under investigation. Furthermore, the model is flexible and therefore permits the inco-operation of other important factors not in the original formulation. The customization of the model within the pastoral setting allows for the analysis of the supply, demand and structural factors which are central to the questions of conflicts, environmental security and governance among the pastoral communities in Kenya.

The study used both primary and secondary data and employed the (Sources, Issues Parties, Attitude/Feelings, Behaviour, Intervention and Outcome (SIPABIO) conflict analysis model to examine the information. The content-relationship analytical framework allows the utilization and integration of both qualitative and quantitative approaches into the study. Moreover, it does not only allow for the systematic examination of the relevant issues but also provides for the inclusion of factors missing in the original conceptualization to situate the plight of the pastoralists within the broader framework of literature at the intersection of intermittent conflicts, environmental stress, resource scarcities and of poor governance.

The study concludes that there are links between conflicts and environmental security against the backdrop of governance deficit manifested in historical neglect, weak and limited state presence worsened by the geographical continuity across international borders of Uganda, South Sudan and Ethiopia. The form and nature of the link is double edged; conflict elements can cause environmental security and verse versa. But more important the study problematizes these factors within the context of the pastoral setting and identifies very specific conflict causing factors and environmental insecurity generating factors. It refutes the notion that conflicts among the pastoralists are mainly a consequence of the scarcity of resources and environmental stress and instead acknowledges a combination of various factors behind instability in pastoral areas but more fundamental identifies governance deficit as the missing gap. Furthermore, the study does not only affirm the theoretical prepositions to the environmental conflict thesis and scarcity driven explanations of violent conflict fostered by environmental conditions, but also notes that conventional and traditional institutional and legislative frameworks for conflict prevention, management resolution related to resources are important considerations.

These factors are closely intertwined, very complicated and combine in a very complex and crucial way to shape and influence the livelihood of the pastoralists. The solution to the perennial conflicts and environmental insecurity lies largely in the promotion of good governance that will ensure effective institutional, normative, policy and administrative frameworks for sustainable exploitation, utilization and management of the resources (water pasture) including security within the pastoral areas and not in providing them abundantly and cannot be divorced from the contemporary regional and global issues in time and place.