

*Analysis of silence in policy on Farmers-pastoralists
conflict in the hotspot districts of Tanzania*

Parit Saruni

Introduction

Farmers-pastoralists conflicts are a global challenge and governments are struggling to resolve the conflicts to provide practical solutions. A plethora of literature on causes, types and impacts of these conflicts is available in Tanzania (Kajembe *et al.*, 2003; Abdallah *et al.*, 2006; Maganga *et al.*, 2007; Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009; Mwamfupe, 2015; Saruni *et al.*, 2018; Walwa, 2020). Nevertheless, analysis on the role of the silence in various policy documents on the farmers-pastoralists conflict in Tanzania is scanty. Studies show that these conflicts are anchored on the immediate and structural factors such as the failure of local leaders to follow the due process in implementing policies effectively (Keenja, 2017), political interference in land matters; lack of security of tenure (Rweyemamu, 2019; Sanga, 2019), popular narratives on modernization of pastoralism (Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009); rapid population growth and climate change (Kaswamila, 2012; Walwa, 2017), and lack of provision of public services and infrastructure mainly water for the pastoralists (Mwamfupe, 2015).

Generally, the drivers of farmer-pastoral conflicts seem to revolve around the mindsets of the government with respect to the contemporary position of pastoralism in the 21st century. For example in December 2005 in his inaugural speech while addressing parliament 'President Jakaya Kikwete stated that...*“we will take steps to improve our livestock keeping...we are obliged to abandoned pastoralism which is turning the entire country into a grazing zone...neither pastoralists nor cattle are getting fatter...we cannot continue with pastoralism in the 21st century.....”*. This is what Lane (1991) argued that statements by government

officials and the language of policy instruments reflect the old orthodoxy based on outdated theories about pastoral rationality and the nature and value of customary land tenure.

The structural causes of farmer-pastoralists conflicts are policy and regulatory deficiency, agricultural encroachment in pastoral areas preventing mobility of livestock; heavy-handed and non-inclusive approach; corrupt government officials and police officers, inadequate capacity in village land use planning, and insecurity of land tenure (Cousins, 1996; Kajembe *et al.*, 2003; Mbonile, 2005; Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009; Mwamfupe, 2015; Saruni *et al.*, 2018; Bergius *et al.*, 2020). Persistent conflicts have negative impacts on farmers and pastoralists in many ways, consequently, calling for adaptation strategies to enhance resilience in the aftermath of conflict.

Resilience in the aftermath of violent conflicts is crucial to avoid prolonged stress and psychological damage which are associated with the negative impacts of conflicts. According to Krohne (2002), resilience strategies are life skills strategies used by conflict actors to overcome stress. These strategies and practices equally help farmers and pastoralists to live and survive under uncertainty (Nori & Scoones, 2019) such as in times of violent conflicts, that are known to harbor devastating impacts on the well-being of people including robbing them of their happiness. Similarly, prolonged conflict in the hotspot districts of Tanzania has caused significant physical and psychological losses to farmers and pastoralists to result in the loss of life and property (Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009; Bergius *et al.*, 2020; Saruni *et al.*, 2018). Despite the negative impacts of conflict, studies (Kajembe *et al.*, 2003; Mwamfupe, 2015; Saruni *et al.*, 2018; Walwa, 2020) have focussed much on other aspects of conflicts, but, scholarly literature about silence in policies articulation on pastoralists issues is rather scarce in Tanzania.

Pastoralists are thought to be irrational accumulators of livestock with land tenure systems structurally incapable of efficient land use. This is reflected in national policies that aim to destock pastoral herds, transform the traditional pastoral economy and take land from pastoralists for other uses (Lane, 1991). Fratkin and Sher-Mei-Wu (1997), argued that forcing one or another group to give up their rights to the land is not the answer to land crowding; negotiation over shared resources must include all parties, especially representatives of the pastoralist groups themselves. The analysis in this letter is anticipated to provide ground for the review of various policies, acts, and strategies affecting the coexistence of farmers and pastoralists in Tanzania. Some of these documents include the Village and Land Acts both of 1999, the Agriculture policies and, the Livestock policies. The review of the policies should largely be guided by the belief that pastoralism is not an outdated system of livestock keeping, but rather, it is a means of livelihood that supports over 10,000 households in Tanzania (the United Republic of Tanzania, 2015). The purpose of this letter is to provide an empirical

account of how silence in policies can perpetuate farmers-pastoralists conflict in the hotspots districts of Tanzania.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Kiteto and Kilosa districts which are earmarked as conflict hotspots in Tanzania (Massoi, 2015) because the districts have persistent violent farmers-pastoralists conflicts reflected in the loss of human life and property damage. Both districts have a higher population of farmers and pastoralists. The worse ever recorded conflicts include the December 2002 fighting between pastoralists and farmers in Kilosa which claimed the lives of 38 people in Rudewa-Mbuyuini village. Also, the January 2014 farmer-pastoralist clashes in Enkusero village in Kiteto claimed 10 lives, in which 20 people were injured and, 60 houses were burnt and other properties were damaged (Ubwani, 2014). Data was collected using qualitative approaches mainly focus group discussions, in-depth interviews with key informants as well as observation. Review of various policy documents such as Tanzania's Agriculture policies, Livestock policies, various Acts, by-laws, and other regulatory frameworks that affect the two sectors. The popular narratives reproduced in the popular media with regard to pastoralism, and statements issued by politicians in this regard were also analyzed. Key informants to the study included among others: the District Commissioner (DC); the District Executive Director (DED); Officer Commanding District (OCD); leaders of community-based organizations; traditional leaders '*Il-aigwanak*' among the Maasai pastoralists community; local government staff; and, the elderly, the youth as well as influential people in crop and livestock production domains. The opinion of ordinary farmers and pastoralists with regard to these conflicts was also solicited to get their insights.

Results and discussion

According to the letter's findings, the prevailing conflicts include farmers versus pastoralists along village boundaries; farmers versus pastoralists over obstruction of livestock routes; and, farmers versus farmers over the use and control of the land. The major drivers of these conflicts included crop damage by livestock; inefficiency of the government to timely take action to address the underlying causes of conflict, an excessive large herd of cattle surpassing the land carrying capacity in conflict-affected spots, and an intertwined web of corruption involving many actors.

Generally, pastoral land is not guided and protected by any law. Delineation of grazing land under the Village land use plan tries to do away with pastoral and nomadic life which

has been at the core of farmer-pastoral conflict for the last two decades. This is so because the popular narratives reproduced in the media, portray that pastoralists are not dynamics, as they are ignorant of the fact that there is life beyond livestock rearing. These narratives are embedded with perceptions that farm crops among pastoralists are regarded as grass hence they believe that they have a right to graze anywhere. The prevailing narratives in the conflict hotspot districts have failed to appreciate the fact that, currently some change has occurred and pastoralists have diversified their forms of livelihood systems to include farming. However, the policies have kept away the way of life of the pastoral societies; they have remained silent in protecting their land and pastoralism, in general, as means of their survival. Most policies condemn nomadic life as an outdated style of rearing livestock, they are trying to shift away from pastoralism and instead encourage the modernization of livestock-keeping initiatives. Despite the silence in various policy documents to articulate challenges of pastoralism, farmers and pastoralists have continued to possess inadequate knowledge of the existing policies governing land matters further complicating the matter. Additionally, there is huge corruption in land matters which appears to be systemic in nature, as it involves many players at different administrative levels of land governance. The involvement of different actors in corrupt practices further complicates the matter and increases the conflicts.

It is also argued in this letter that when land-use planning is executed in the country, it is crucial to consider the potential physical conditions of land development constraints and opportunities. For example, if the land suitability index is used to inform land-use planning, instead of living the matter in the hands of the village leaders and the village land committees, it could help to prevent conflict. This system will minimize delineation of village land just to please villagers in demand of land but instead, the land-use planning system will be determined by specific land parameters suitable for a particular use. This system of land planning will also assist in the allocation of land to different uses without compromising issues of environmental conservations. For example, the areas in village lands that are not suitable for either crop or livestock production could be protected by law as village land forest reserves. This will help communities to benefit from forestry resources such as firewood, timber, and other forest products. This could also be used for other conservation initiatives such as to maintain biodiversity by guarding random felling of trees in village land reserves.

Contrary to the protected areas in the form of national parks, forest reserves, wildlife management areas, and game reserves, the policies are silent on land delineated to the farmers and pastoralists. All protected areas in Tanzania are gazetted, but, the policy is silent about land occupied by farmers and pastoralists. It does not spell out how the village land should be appropriated among the two groups. This is difficult especially for agro-pastoralists in Tanzania because their dual livelihood system depended on crop and livestock keeping production

complicating their aspect of land ownership. For example, Land Act Number 4 and Village Act Number 5 both of 1999 partly address some issues of land administration in Tanzania, but both have remained silent about the declaration of the village land in the government Gazette. The same applies to the Agriculture policies which are largely pro-large-scale agriculture under the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor and (SAGCOT), driven by wealthy foreign investors; and smallholder farming under the government-led Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) and *Kilimo kwanza* initiatives. The livestock policies support modernizations initiatives without clearly articulating how the pastoral communities should be protected against land dispossession. This silence predisposes village land to dispossession which denies these communities the right to land ownership (Mussa *et al.*, 2019; Saruni *et al.*, 2018). The silence in policy will create more conflicts in the future between farmers and pastoralists hence continuing to challenge development initiatives in rural areas.

Besides the aforementioned drivers of conflicts, these conflicts are also exacerbated by the changing climatic conditions. In the past two decades, livestock used to graze around the homesteads because there was quality pasture and plenty of water. Neighbors shared these resources amicably, but now the quality grass has gone and water sources equally are dry because of unreliable rains exacerbated by climate change. Shortages of pasture and water have triggered the migration of pastoralists to other villages to save their livestock from drought resulting in direct conflicts with farmers. Equally, climate change has forced farmers to settle on land designated for pastoralists. To survive, the farmers have started irrigation farming leading to competition for water and land with pastoralists and hence conflicts. Under such difficult and challenging circumstances, one of the options left for pastoralists is to acquire some adaptation strategies which include conservation of feeds for the dry period to combat the impacts associated with changing climate and increasing population which are exacerbating some of these conflicts. Some adaptation strategies include the construction of dams, water pans, and livestock uptake programs but the policy is still silent about these options.

The effects of conflict on farmers-pastoralists well-being manifest through differences in asset ownership, household dwelling conditions, and the degree of happiness and education levels. In the two conflict hotspots, female-headed households were most likely to be happy than male-headed-household who are always in combat while women either remained at home with children or took refuge in the forests to avoid being harmed. The less educated households were most likely to be happy than those with better homes and permanent housing structures for fear of their dwellings being destroyed when there is an outbreak of violent conflict. The least educated households were most likely to be happy than the highly educated household with better homes for fear of destruction of their dwellings. The male-headed households, larger and younger households are likely to be resilient to conflicts than female-headed house-

holds and smaller and older households. Generally, land ownership is found to increase the resilience to conflicts among the farmer-pastoralists households in a post-conflict era. Lack of land ownership among farmers and pastoralists was largely associated with policies and strategies that are contrary to pastoralists' mobility (Homewood, 2003).

The policy implications

The study established that lands allocated for crop and livestock production in Tanzania are not gazetted contrary to protected land such as the national parks; the wildlife management areas (WMAs); the game reserves; and the forest reserves and hence predisposing corrupt practices to unfaithful government officials which easily attracts dispossession of this land by investors and other land grabbers in form of investment. In view of the aforementioned concerns, it is suggested that: (i) The Land Use Plan Act No.10 of 2007 needs to be taken to parliament by the Ministry of Land and Settlement for repeal to include clauses that make land suitability index mandatory during land mapping prior to carrying out any land use planning in Tanzania; and (ii) The Ministry of Constitution and Legal Affairs in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries should draft a bill and tabled it in parliament to allow the review of the National Land Policy of 2001, Land Act No. 4 of 1999 and Village Land Act No. 5 of 1999 to include provisions that make declaration of land owned by farmers and pastoralists in government gazette compulsory.

Conclusion and recommendations

Land allocated to various uses is not informed by the land suitability index implying that the land use plan is not informed by expertise knowledge but rather harbors political views. This eventually affects the land carrying capacity hence conflicts with regard to control and use. The climate has drastically changed in the past two decades but there have not been any adaptation strategies in place to address climate change in conflict hotspots. The recommendations advanced are for different ministries that include the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, the Ministry of Land, Housing and Human Settlement Development, and other stakeholders dealing with land matters. (i) The Local Government Authorities in Kilosa and Kiteto District councils should include climate change adaptation strategies in the form of construction of dams, water pans, and livestock uptake programs as a policy issue. (ii) The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development in collaboration with the District Councils should ensure that there are proper land use plans in all villages which will help in minimizing farmer-pastoralist conflicts. (iii)The Ministry of Agriculture,

Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries should carry out land carrying capacity studies to determine appropriate land carrying capacity of rangelands in order to maintain the right number of livestock units that would minimize excessive pressure on the available grazing resource hence, curbing down the unwarranted livestock migration to undesignated areas unless under difficult times such as during the drought. (iv)The alleged corrupt practices should be investigated by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) in order to identify the source of corruption and institute legal actions against the culprits.

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