Recasting Low Intensity Conflicts in Laikipia County, Kenya, through Protracted Social Conflicts Paradigm: Causes, Socioeconomic, Political and Security Implications

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Abstract

Protracted Social Conflicts (PSC) in Kenya have occurred in several counties more so in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) with conflict management mechanisms being incapable or unwilling to find lasting resolutions. The PSCs often manifest as Low Intensity Conflicts (LIC) as experienced in many parts of the world, *mutatis mutandis*. In Kenya, LIC is present in form of insurgencies, banditry and ethnic conflicts. The LICs lead to untold human suffering and loss of property. Several solutions and mitigation measures have been attempted with short-term successes. Therefore there is a need to find long-lasting solutions to intractable Low Intensity Conflicts in Laikipia in order to mitigate the recurrent disruptive effects on socioeconomic development. To set the expositions in perspective, this article utilizes Protracted Social Conflict Theory postulated by Edward Azar. Through analysis of secondary data, the study found out that the root causes of conflicts in Laikipia County, included; inequality in resource distribution and marginalization, proliferation of small arms, land ownership and tenure, political incitements among others. Implications of conflicts in Laikipia County included; diminished food production, destruction of property, death of young energetic men, closure of schools, disrupted medical support provision, proliferation of small arms and light weapons among others. The study recommended that stakeholders need to develop a comprehensive conflict resolution policy framework, comprising a mixture of formal and traditional approaches, to address land tenure and marginalisation, which are the core causes of conflict.

Subject Areas

Politics, Sociology

1. Introduction

This article recasts the understanding of Low Intensity Conflicts (LIC) in Kenya through the prism of protracted social conflicts as propounded by Edward Azar. In doing this, it is hoped that the paradigm shift will inform better conflict resolutions that address root causes of LICs in Kenya, and specifically Laikipia County. This article is structured into seven sections. The background to the study provides contexts where the arguments are nested and anchored. Statement of the problem provides the compelling issues for the study, which is the need to recast LICs in Laikipia County in the paradigm of PSC in order to proffer appropriate resolutions. Theoretical framework anchors the study on Protracted Social Conflict Theory by Edward Azar postulating that conflicts are best understood in the identity and needs prism. Literature review examines the relevant scholarly works in the area to inform the study and identify the academic gaps. The findings and discussion section outlines, in summary, the major findings along the aspects of causes, socio-economic and political implications as well as conflict resolution approaches. Finally, the paper concludes and makes recommendations for action by respective government agencies.

2. Background to the Study

Protracted Social Conflicts (PSC) manifest as Low Intensity Conflicts (LIC) and have been the main feature of confrontations since the end of the World War [1]. LICs have occurred in many parts of the world such as Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. South Asia attracted the attention of scholars as an important area of focus in conflict studies due to the premise that most of the notable conflicts have occurred in the region. Furthermore, certain South Asian states have earned the distinction as a hub of global terrorism, where no country has been free from insurgencies and separatist movements. In Myanmar, discrimination and marginalization of Burmese minority groups led to protracted conflicts characterized by government repression [2]. Marginalization threatens to deprive human needs which in turn threatens a group's survival and identity this leading to conflicts.

In Africa, several states have experienced insurgencies and terrorist style conflicts by non-state actors against the established state government. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), there were at least 15 countries with active armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in 2019: such as Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique,

Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan [3]. Eight were low-intensity, subnational armed conflicts, and seven were high-intensity armed conflicts in Nigeria, Somalia, the DRC, Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan and Cameroon [3] [4]. Almost all the armed conflicts were internationalized because of involvement of regional state actors, either directly or through proxies.

Kenya has also had its fair share of LIC ranging from the Shifta conflicts (1963-1967), Sabaot Land Defence Forces (SLDF) Movement in Mt. Elgon, Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) in the coastal areas of Mombasa, and Al Shabaab incursions and attacks [5]. To address these security challenges, the Government of Kenya (GoK) was resolute in its response, which saw decisive defeats of insurgence. The SLDF arose due to claims of land tenure injustice concerning the Chepyuk settlement in Mt. Elgon region. The conflict was between two Sabaot Clans of *Suk* and *Koony* [6] [7] [8]. The Kenya Defence Forces was able to vanquish the insurgency in 2008 and the region has enjoyed calm since then. The MRC were based in the Kenyan Coastal areas and advocated for their causes (marginalization and land grievances) through violence [5].

In Laikipia County, recurrent conflicts have occurred over land grievances between pastoralists, agriculturalists and ranchers, who occupy northern, eastern, and western Sub-Counties of Laikipia County. Notably devastating conflicts were experienced in areas of *Ol Moran* [9]. Conflicts in Laikipia County have been posited as having roots in natural resources and land grabbing, political wrangling, and human-wildlife conflict [10]. Recent land conflicts in the County, Kenya, have re-ignited debates about the future of minority land ownership in Kenya. Scholars posit that with climate change, foreign investment, and population growth placing unprecedented pressure on lands, Laikipia has become a battleground for land struggles involving some of Kenya's most alienated ethnic and racial groups [11]. While significant segments of land in Laikipia are owned by foreigners, or Kenyans of European descent, the county is home to other minority landowners whose political significance is underappreciated [12]. Though the owners of some large ranches in Laikipia see neighbouring pastoralists as liabilities, others see them as a source of political capital or allies in the struggle to secure their land tenure. This thus stokes PSC.

3. Statement of the Problem

Similar to other ASAL areas of Kenya, Laikipia County has been affected by PSC manifesting as LIC. The conflicts have left many people homeless, disrupted educations, healthcare, destroyed infrastructures, and many people have lost their lives. This has disrupted the peace that is essential for the development and prosperity of the area thereby threatening to roll back socioeconomic developments and lead to even more conflicts. While both County and National governments have tried to engage conflict management mechanisms, it has appeared to lead to temporary periods of "silenced guns", which thunder back after a while. As in any conflict, unwarranted loss of lives and property is usually the

unfortunate outcome. The situation leads to conflict trap phenomenon where the likelihood of having a full-blown ethnic fighting and wanton destruction of property and any moment becomes imminent [2] [10]. Unless the Laikipia LIC is understood within the context of PSC, opportunities for appropriate solutions may be missed; thus the problem will persist. This therefore necessitated a paradigm shift by this study to make an in-depth review of the causes, socioeconomic, political and security implications of the Laikipia conflicts in order to proffer lasting solutions for implementation.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study used the Protracted Social Conflicts Theory (PSC) developed by Edward Azar. PSC was developed through several seminal works [12] [13] [14]. These seminal publications provided a theoretical conceptualization and foundation from which many PSC scholars have built. In PSC theory, social conflicts are denoted as hostile interactions between communal groups that are based on deep-seated racial, ethnic, religious and cultural hatred, and that persist over long periods with sporadic outbreaks of violence. Furthermore, all internal disputes have at least one of the following characteristics [14]: Firstly, they are lengthy and often nasty in nature, which can be traced to the belligerents' "irrational reasons". Secondly, the possibility that old animosities, religious fervour, or familial loyalty explain why certain internal conflicts persist even after they should have ended. Thirdly, the contradictory identities and ideals that lie at the heart of the majority of internal conflicts make compromise extremely difficult. Finally, there are structural factors of conflict, such as a variety of incentives to perpetuate violence and disincentives to compromise that stymie dialogue and settlements.

In multi-ethnic states dominated by one communal, identity group coalition of organizations that fail to consider the concerns of minorities, frustration and divisiveness are bred [15]. Azar [16] noted that conflict arises because of the proximity of different identity groups. Their actions are often the culmination of accumulated anger and bitterness, with clear emotional and psychological patterns of indoctrinated racism and hatred. Fighting exacerbates social divisions by fostering anxiety about one's own survival, scapegoating others, and other divisive political rhetoric. These assertions are true, *mutatis mutandis*, of ethnic configuration and power relations in Kenya and Laikipia County in particular. Thus, PSC theory is relevant as its explanation relates to the contention of the article that ethnic politics, resource competitiveness, ethnic rivalries, and unmet wants are some of the core causes of ethnic violence in Kenya's Laikipia County.

5. Review of Literature

This section briefly reviews relevant literature in order to place the discussion into context, nest it within the bigger conflict studies, and tease out the causes and implications of conflicts in Laikipia County as well as the PSC paradigm of the LIC in order to recast conflict resolution approaches.

5.1. Root Causes of Conflicts in Laikipia County

A study by Stewart [16] reviewed the root causes of conflicts in developing world. The study noted that many of the ethnic identities in Africa that today seem to be so strong were created by the colonial powers for administrative purposes and have weak origins in precolonial Africa. This negative colonial legacy is particularly true for Kenya and exploited by conflict mongers. Ethnic boundaries are generally fluid thus abused by some political leaders who deliberately invoke historical memories to engender or strengthen identity claims in the competition for power and resources [17]. The sentiment by Stewart is relevant to the Laikipia conflict as it touches on the ethnic, economical, and social aspects of the conflict causes. The study acknowledges that conflicts in developing countries have heavy human, economic, and social costs and are a major cause of poverty and underdevelopment.

Goodhand [17] explains inter-ethnic conflicts in terms of motive *i.e.* rebellions occur when grievances are sufficiently acute that people want to engage in violent protests. Ethnicity in itself is a self-seeking validation to inter-ethnic conflicts. Goodhand further argues that the true culprit is economic decline and poverty as well as competition over scarce economic resources [17]. Poverty, economic inequality and stagnation as well as ethnic composition, political decay and resource base are necessary ingredients for inter-ethnic conflicts internationally. Additionally, during the inter-ethnic conflicts, the poor and economically marginalized form a pool of recruits for rebel movements have happened in Cambodia and Sri Lanka [17]. Many current inter-ethnic conflicts originate from and are fought out in regions whose communities have limited voice and experience persistent poverty, as is the case of certain community segments in Laikipia County.

A study by Nafziger and Juha [18] contends that economic inequality is an important cause of inter-ethnic conflicts. The scholars aver that high-income concentration by a few increases the perception of relative deprivation by affected segments of society, thereby increasing the risk of political disintegration. Policies that lead to inequality for example land distribution, taxation, public expenditure can exacerbate ethnic and regional competition and inter-ethnic conflicts ([18] p. 156). Relating this to ethnic related conflicts in Laikipia County, the pastoralist communities and the agriculturalist communities differ in terms of economic and political might and skewed allocation of economic resources such as land. Although compelling and relevant, the study by Nafziger and Juha [18] slightly defers from the Laikipia situation because the majority Bantu communities do not come from one ethnic group and they have never expressed desire to disengage from Kenya for political and economic autonomy. On the contrary, the agricultural communities would desire to economically and politically assert themselves and improve their livelihoods, particularly on food security.

Nnoli [19] and Otite [20] using sociological approach to inter-ethnic conflicts in Africa observes that conflicts occur when the majority who control access to

power and resources of the state advance social discrimination based on ethnic parameters. Later, Otite [21] related his argument to that of Rwanda, where it was the majority Hutu against the minority Tutsi who possessed the state privileges. Although the Hutus were farmers and Tutsi pastoralists, the minority pastoralists were more socio-politically powerful than the majority agriculturalists leading to the genocide of 1994. Agriculture and food security drastically declined to subject the people of Rwanda to humanitarian aid. Arguments by Otite [20] [21] relate with the situation of Laikipia County because the explicit relationship between the minority pastoralists and the majority agriculturalists is one of contested legitimacy and legality of land ownership respectively. However, the point of divergence is on ethnic composition of the Rwandan case comparative to Laikipia case. While the Rwanda case has two communities, Laikipia County has a multi-ethnic residence on either side of the economic divide. Nevertheless, observations by Nnoli [19] on the role of politicization of ethnicity as a possible cause of inter-ethnic conflicts are generalizable to Laikipia County since political autonomy and control is a desire of every community.

Mohamud and Rutu [22] posit that conflicts in the East African region particularly Kenya and Uganda revolve around the predatory exploitation of economic resources. Inter-ethnic conflicts abound between herders and farmers. The competition for resources account for the largest percentage of conflicts in the East African region and is further fuelled by the illegal ownership of guns. This is due to the porous borders within the region. Outcomes such as insecurity, removal from public buildings and outright violence are the main reasons of exodus of the Somali nationals to refugee camps in Kenya [22]. In Laikipia County, pastoralists and agriculturalists engage in conflicts in competition over grazing and farmland between the pastoralists and the agricultural communities remains a pertinent factor of the inter-ethnic conflicts.

In the context of Kenya, Okoth and Ogot [23] consider inter-ethnic belligerence as a product of skewed allocation of economic resources, political underrepresentation, religious ganging and failed governance respectively as causes of such conflicts. These inter-ethnic conflicts are fanned by the fact that Africa comprises nation-states that are highly ethnocentric in character [23]. Corruption by those in power is highly dependent on nepotism consideration and is used as the springboard to a lucrative life. African communities inevitably start jostling for such privileges, which evoke open dissatisfaction and conflict. Laikipia County fits in this analysis because pastoralist communities feel marginalized and condescended by the agricultural communities. This inevitably generates inter-ethnic conflicts. However, it does not precisely explain how ethnicity has led to the pastoralist communities' socio-economic and political marginalization and thus requires a more scientific inquiry.

5.2. Socioeconomic, Political and Security Implications of Conflicts in Laikipia County

Conflict consequences afflict the society and affect lives and livelihood. The

predominant consequences are negative. However, scholars such as Paul Lederach posit that conflicts can have positive outcome if they are transformed [24]. This sub-section will attempt to explore some of the social, economic, political and security implications of conflict, while relating them to Laikipia county situation. However, there is a notable scarcity of literature regarding political implications of conflicts especially in Laikipia County.

5.2.1. Social Implications

In their paper, "*Civil wars kill and maim people long after the shooting stops*"; Ghobarah, Huth and Russett [25] argue that civil wars have long-term effects on civilian suffering. Analysing the World Health Organization's (WHO) measure of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), they stipulate that 8.01 million DALYs were lost in the year 1999 from civil wars that occurred during the period 1991-97 [25]. The researchers examined the longer-term effects in a cross-national (1999) analysis of WHO new fine-grained data on death and disability broken down by age, gender, and type of disease or condition. In doing this, they tested hypotheses about the impact of civil wars and found substantial long-term effects, even after controlling for several other factors. They estimated that the additional burden of death and disability incurred in 1999, from the indirect and lingering effects of civil wars in the years 1991-97, was approximately equal to that incurred directly and immediately from all wars in 1999 [25]. The analysis by the scholars resonate with Laikipia situation since it highlights social impacts of conflicts; that includes deaths leading to change of social roles, deterioration of social services, disintegration of families, increased animosity between ethnic groups among others.

A technical report by Kadir, Shenoda, Goldhagen, and Pitterma [26] estimates that more than 1 in 10 children worldwide are affected by armed conflict. The effects are both direct and indirect and are associated with immediate and long-term harm. The direct effects of conflict include death, physical and psychological trauma, and displacement while indirect effects are related to a large number of factors, including inadequate and unsafe living conditions, environmental hazards, caregiver mental health, separation from family, displacement-related health risks, and the destruction of health, public health, education, and economic infrastructure [26]. Combatants target children and health workers during attacks; and children are recruited or forced to take part in combat in a variety of ways. They concluded that armed conflict is both a toxic stress and a significant social determinant of child health.

Several studies have further examined the social consequences of conflicts especially how it affects the household. A study by Justino [27] observed that violent conflicts kill and injure civilians and combatants alike and cause severe psychological damage to those involved in fights, those living in war-torn communities and to displaced populations. The levels of mortality and morbidity associated with armed conflict are explained not only as outcomes of fighting but are also for the most part the result of spreading disease and malnutrition

[28] [29]. Armed civil conflicts are highly correlated with increases in infant and maternal mortality rates, larger proportion of untreated illnesses and reduction in nutritional levels, even when these are not directly caused by the initial conflict. For instance, Verwimp and van Bavel [30] show that although refugee women tend to have higher fertility rates than other population groups, their children (girls in particular) have a much lower probability of survival due to the health and socio-economic conditions experienced in refugee camps.

5.2.2. Economic Implications

Gates, Hegre, Nygard, and Strand [31] conducted a statistical analysis of the developmental consequences of conflict; in which they evaluated the effects of armed conflict with respect to achievement of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as well as on economic growth. The analysis showed that civil war harms the achievement of most of these development goals. They concluded that the consequences of war extend far beyond direct deaths. In addition to battlefield casualties, armed conflict often leads to forced migration, refugee flows, capital flight, and the destruction of societies' infrastructure. It also creates a development gap between those countries that have experienced armed conflict and those that have not. While the study by Gates, Hegre, Nygard, and Strand [31] focuses on the Macro-level, the economic effects are felt more at the household levels. This is true of the Laikipia conflicts that lead to deteriorated household economy, destruction/loss of property, loss of animals through cattle rustling, loss of crops through invasion of farms and ranches by herders looking for pasture among others.

More recently, the dynamics of conflicts in Africa have taken new dimensions as most countries such as Nigeria, Somalia, Libya, Mali, Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, Burkina Faso to mention but a few, have been struggling with the challenges of insurgency [32]. Even most recently, there have been growing concerns about the emergence of new forms of armed conflict in the region such as xenophobic attacks, banditry, extrajudicial killings, kidnapping among others. This may complicate the developmental challenges facing the region. Thus, there are socioeconomic and economic implications of these conflicts as peace in the society is disrupted leading to human, environmental and material losses that go beyond what existing resources can replace [32]. Similarly, Laikipia conflicts portend severe damage to human lives and under some conditions increase the population of internally displaced persons thereby disrupting productive activities.

Studies on the effects of the 1994 Rwanda genocide have found a strong negative correlation between destruction of human capital and economic recovery [33]. Distinguishing between genocide, which reflects a brutal destruction of human capital, and civil war, which destroyed less human capital and is associated with higher losses of physical capital, Serneels and Verpoorten [33] find distinct effects. Returns to land were lower, and returns to unskilled labour higher for genocide-affected areas. The direct consequence was the decrease in labour force, as the genocide targeted adult males in particular. In contrast, the

returns to skilled labour were lower in civil war affected areas, but not in areas that experienced genocide, which was consistent with civil war bringing more damage to factors that augment skilled. As similar scenario is replicable in Laikipia where the conflicts being experienced have the potential to destroy human capital through deaths or displacement and therefore hampering post conflict recovery and development.

According to Opiyo, Wasonga, Schilling, and Mureithi [34] conflicts also pose significant strains on public finances, lowering national revenues, raising military spending, and shifting resources away from development and social spending, which further aggravates the economic and social costs of the conflicts. The sentiment underscores the significant costs and formidable challenges faced by countries suffering from conflict and thus the need to prevent conflicts, including by promoting inclusive economic development, building institutional capacity, and social cohesion. The same line of thought applies to Laikipia County. Whereas investments to restore security are necessary now, the hindsight of it would indicate that the resources being channelled to security restoration would have been otherwise used for developmental purposes. Viewed from this perspective, it makes a compelling case for preventive measures so as to save resources for economic development rather than militaristic security reactions.

5.2.3. Political Implications

Political implications of conflicts manifest in the ways conflicts shape political outcomes as well as the way politics exploit conflict situations. In essence, it is the cause-effect relationship between political leadership and conflicts and vice versa. According to Gardner [35] defines leadership as the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers although in most cases they use tribal-based politics [36]. The concern therefore is on how much influence do political leaders have on the likelihood of ethnic civil war. Representatives of the elite manipulation theory argue that leaders incite ethno-nationalism to secure their own hold on power [37] [38]. The theory of elite manipulation [37] [38] places the blame squarely with elites, which for the purpose of this study are construed as any political figures that hold or compete for political office. Although they cannot reasonably be expected to be an exception to the principal-agent problem, it is rational for them to look out for their personal interest and fear of democratization provides a powerful motive [39]. Gagnon [38] argues that elites were able to skilfully steer the public discourse away from political change towards ethnic conflict even though ethnicity was initially non-issue for the majority of the population. Elite resort to violence to secure their interests. Asymmetric access to modern technologies such as small arms, motorized transportation and long-distance communication also reshape the dynamics of conflict, which has significantly increased the magnitude of human fatalities [38]. Wrongly conceived development schemes and investments implemented without the active participation of local communities results in unclear property

rights mechanism thus increasing tensions.

A dearth of literature exists drawing the political implications of conflicts in Laikipia County. Researchers have tended to focus on politics as a causal factor rather than a consequence of conflicts. The study therefore looked at other cases where politics has been examined as consequence rather than a cause. For instance, a study by Schilling, Opiyo, and Scheffran [40] draws the imagery of wealthy politicians who maintain their status due to warmongering. Citing the case of Turkana and Pokot Counties, they argue that the warlords appear to be the wealthiest and hence they control all aspects of social and economic life, and even the political orientation of the people [40]. Thus, poverty, hunger and destitution have been accompanied by aggressive and predatory pursuance of political goals. This argument is supported by Moru [41] who avers that the state is reduced to an arena of competing interests and political objectives inconsistent either with its role as the main monopoliser of the use of force or the sole arbiter of divergent ethnic and regional interests. Currently warlords dominate the politics of the pastoral communities. The warlords now control all aspects of social, economic and political life of the people and thus they are a law unto themselves [41]. Similarly, in Laikipia, community leaders have been accused of riding the wave of violence for political gains and thus being complicit [11].

5.2.4. Security Implications

In a study by Schilling, Opiyo, and Scheffran [40] observed that conflicts lead to distrust in other communities and a strong omnipresent perception of insecurity which entails several and partly interconnected subsequent effects. These effects include ineffective resource use, reduced mobility, closing of markets and schools and obstacles for investments. In combination with droughts, diseases, small arms and social, political and economic marginalisation, the effects of raiding pose a significant threat for pastoral livelihoods. In fact, one could argue that the conflicts are raiding pastoral livelihoods. The same sentiments are true for Laikipia County since the endemic conflict situation has fomented animosities that will take a very long time to resolve. Such adversarial relationship is compounded by factors such as drought and famine thus feeding the cycle of conflict making it intractable.

A study by Osamba [42] concluded that violence and warfare in north-western Kenya have created an environment of insecurity. Cattle rustling has even created tension and conflict among the neighbouring societies. The twin phenomena of banditry and cattle rustling have become endemic in the region, affecting approximately two million people, ranging from the Turkana in the north, the Samburu and Pokot in the centre, and the Keiyo, Marakwet and Tugen in the south of the study area [42]. Osamba [42] deplores that cattle warlords are having a field day in this environment of lawlessness; the warlords easily manipulate the idle and impoverished youths to join their private armies, the ability of the warlords to organise and arm their forces is a clear indication that the state no longer has the monopoly of the use of force. The Pokot youth seems to be happy

in enlisting into these armies, which they feel, is synonymous to defending societal interest against an enemy, the state [42]. As relates to Laikipia County, the conflict situation has evidently created an insecure environment where bandits, acting alone or in organised manner, run the show with the covert assistance of political elites.

5.2.5. Conflict Management Approaches in Laikipia County

Conflict management approaches for conflicts in Laikipia County need to be recast in the context if PSC that manifest as LIC. This would include a blend of traditional local approaches and official approaches to conflict resolution. Monty and Gurr [43] noted that the United Nations (UN), as a world organization advocating for peaceful means of dispute resolution, employs humanitarian intervention measures to obtain lasting peace. Morgenthau [44] lauds such pacific initiatives indication that they have helped to reduce poverty, hunger, starvation, diseases and general helplessness in global communities. However, such pacific measures do not always lead to settlement of disputes and consensus building, leading to continuation of conflicts. This perspective is pertinent in the case of Laikipia, as an explanation as to why several dispute resolution measures in Laikipia have not yielded significant peaceful outcomes. Conversely, Fortna and Howard [45] assert that conflict interventions significantly increase the likelihood of sustainable peace. The authors posit that conflict interventions are more effective if they focused more on the state building and grassroots conflict resolution [45]. Whereas such argument is significant at the national and international levels, it tends to overlook the bottom-up causes of conflicts and resolution measures thereto. Attention needs to be given to grassroots tensions when designing peace agreements, devote significant funding to local conflicts resolution programmes and provide conflict managers with bottom-up training [46]. This is to ensure that peace-building initiatives specifically address the ethnic, political, religious, economic and social divisions present at the micro-level. The above argument is relevant to Laikipia County because micro-level socioeconomic grievances have not been adequately addressed. This stokes up genuine grievances over economic marginalization from the local residents.

Autesserre [47] and Mkutu [48] argue that although civil society organizations (CSOs) play an acceptable facilitative role and stimulate the formation of peace committee at various levels in most of the conflict prone areas in East-Africa, their presence is heavier than that of government. This observation is relevant to Laikipia County because the presence of public benefit organizations or NGOs balance the region's economic marginalization from the state through Income Generating Projects (IGP) for the community [49]. However, operations of such CSOs will require consent from the government in order to act as international peace crusaders in a region of Kenya. This is to ensure synergy of effort as well as curtail any misuse of such avenues. A study by Mwikali and Wafula [49] concludes that persistent displacement, destitution and death has been a common occurrence in Kitui County due to recurrent farmer-herder conflicts have been a

feature of the region since pre-colonial period pitying the *Akamba* farmers and *Somali* and/or *Orma* herders. This has undermined efforts to increase food production in the region. As such, the conflicts have negatively affected communities' livelihoods as well as national stability and development, as the atmosphere they have created has, in the end, lowered the quality of life of the resident communities in Kitui County [49]. In view of this, the authors recommended search for peaceful coexistence through integration of partnership between resident communities with the government and other stakeholders in order to reverse the status quo to the benefit of the resident communities.

According to Bercovitch [50], the resolution of a conflict occurs when the root causes of adequately addressed, thus denying the threat of greater conflict-generating behaviour. Additionally, he argues that the political process is not based on coercion or execution, but rather on a common ground, on which to build durable and lasting solutions; and never to re-examine the conflict in the future. These attributes of conflict resolution in a political process are that there is autonomy in participation, flexibility of the process, speedy and non-coercive mutually satisfying solutions that foster relationships and they address the underlying root causes of conflict leading to efficient resolution as opposed to just a settlement. Approaches that satisfy these requirements are recommended in handling LIC conflicts such as those in Laikipia County.

6. Findings and Discussion

This study relied on secondary data analysis. The data was collected by researchers relating to conflicts in Laikipia County, Samburu County as well as Turkana and West Pokot Counties; and included studies by Akiwumi [51], Ameso, *et al.* [52], Schilling, Opiyo, and Scheffran [40], Leming'ani [53], Omuse [54], Mwenda [55], Mutunga [56] and Warurii [57]. These are studies conducted at Masters and PhD level, journal articles as well as government commission of inquiry into land conflicts in Kenya. They provided a rich diversity of findings for analysis by this paper in an attempt to recast the understanding of LICs in Kenya away from traditional ethnic perspectives to the protracted social conflicts paradigm along aspects of identity and needs perspectives.

6.1. Root Causes of Conflicts in Laikipia County

Understanding the general causes of a conflict is desirable for conflict resolution. However, the essence of conflict resolution is in long-term solutions and transformations that is only feasible through a grasp of the root causes of the conflict [50]. This study therefore attempted to understand the core causal factors of conflicts in Laikipia County through review of both qualitative and quantitative data by other researchers.

6.1.1. Inequality in Resource Distribution and Marginalization in Laikipia County

Secondary descriptive data indicates that majority of conflicts covering the Horn

of Africa are associated with developmental marginalization, land, scarce pasture and water. The scarcity or uneven distribution of these resources can be linked with the decreased resource base as well as the migration observed in the area seasonally as people try to cope up with the eminent conflicts [58]. Research examinations by Leming'ani [53] finds marginalization has led to unequal distribution of resources leading conflicts between white settlers and the pastoralists. This was evidenced in those attacks on European farms by the expansive scale and little scale horticulturalists in a bid to get to water sources. Leming'ani [53] further found out that the most influenced ranges in Laikipia include *Lekiji*, *Rumuruti*, *Segera*, *Daiga*, and entire *Mukogodo* division encompassing Isiolo District. The *Ol Moran* Division has a long history of such severity. *Ng'arua* in Laikipia west, *Rumuruti* division in Laikipia west, *Ol Moran* division in Laikipia west, *Mukogodo* division, in Laikipia north, *Mutamiayu* have been among the most exceedingly affected. Most of these ranches have better infrastructural development than pastoralist community areas thus increase feelings of marginalization.

Dry spell conditions that have been common since 2001 have on a few events constrained the pastoralist looking for crisp field and water to relocate onto private farms and to territories cultivated by agriculturalists [53]. Additionally, Leming'ani [53] found out that there has been a commonness of contention between pilgrims, pastoralists, and vast scale farmers, which has achieved brutal levels, especially in the Northern parts of Laikipia West. This has been fuelled primarily by the agro-pastoralists clashes where agriculturalists and pastoralists vie for access of the restricted assets, to be specific water and field. While these contentions are in seen rivalry for, or shortage of, common assets, the social and institutional settings in which these contentions are implanted add to the pervasiveness, span, power and administration of these contentions.

6.1.2. Proliferation of Small Arms

These findings by Leming'ani [53] indicate that Laikipia is faced with high insecurity levels especially with the proliferation of small arms, a situation that has created a cycle of poverty, limited resources and frequent conflicts. According to Sibanda [59] accessibility of substantial income generating activities is curtailed because the people are in great fear of thefts and fighting in various markets. These findings concur with Mkutu [60] who asserts that the government has compromised monopoly of the instruments of power and force has opened opportunities to perpetuate illegalities. More often than not, the political elite within government have used a legal process such as mopping out guns from Laikipia County in order to politically empower certain communities. However, the pastoral communities have hesitated in surrendering their weapons in fear of intimidation and eventual defeat by their counterparts living in ranches and urban areas. Because of this, the discriminated community automatically loses confidence in the state apparatus to ease tension and takes the law in their hands.

6.1.3. Land Ownership and Tenure

Field Data collected by Leming'ani [53] indicates that Land ownership and tenure is central to the conflicts between settlers and pastoralists in Laikipa County. The data indicates that 94% of Laikipia county natives own between 0 - 0.5 acres of land as opposed to a paltry 6% that own more than 0.5%. This implies that settlers own over 93% of the land. The same is corroborated by a respondent interviewed by Leming'ani who observed that lack of adequate land has been the main issue of the prevalent conflicts in Laikipia. The respondent remarked that, "*these pastoralists have contributed to the situation of conflict in Laikipia because they do not have land and yet most settlers have expansive acres of land*" ([53] p. 37). These findings support the assertions by Mkutu [46] and Waweru [61] who argued that scarcity of resources such as land, pasture and water are a source of conflict in ASAL regions.

Comparative to the land ownership, Leming'ani [53] found out that majority of the land is used for pastoralism. Approximately 88% of the respondents indicated that they used the land for pastoralist activities while small proportions of land are used for ranching (4%), horticulture (2%) and crop farming (6%). Leming'ani [53] also found that respondents hailed from households that owned more than 20 heads of livestock thus indicating that majority were pastoralists. Further to the findings on land use and land tenure, study related the land use and its influence as a causal factor for conflict. Leming'ani [53] found that tribal conflicts were highly influenced by pastoralism as showed by 50% whereas 44% were influenced by ranching, 4% by horticultural activities and lastly 3% of these conflicts were influenced by crop farming activities. The findings on the influences of land use on conflicts in Laikipia support those observations by Kakai [62] who noted that land use and its resources are a major cause of intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic conflict in rural Kenya. The findings draws attention to issues of land and land use coupled with the increasing scarcity of land spaces for competing economic ventures; some of which have cultural significance such pastoralism.

6.1.4. Invasion of Farmlands by Pastoralists

Field data by Mutunga [56] shows that tension between pastoralists and agriculturalists in Laikipia County is perpetuated through the former's intentional invasion of farms for grazing. Mutunga [56] found that 71.10% agreed that conflicts in Laikipia are caused by invasion of farmlands by pastoralists while 11.10% strongly agreed and 17.80% disagreed. The deliberate actions by the pastoralists to graze their animals in farmlands are a manifestation of their entitlement to the lands as traditional grazing fields. The actions indicate the pastoralist communities' grievance over spaces they thick is rightfully theirs and for their livestock. This is an unfortunate result of land distribution and use affects communal areas such as livestock grazing and watering areas. This assertion concurs with sentiments of Nafziger & Juha [18] who indicated that policies that lead to inequality for example land distribution, taxation, public expenditure can exacer-

bate ethnic and regional competition and inter-ethnic conflicts.

6.1.5. Political Incitements

Findings by Mwenda [55] established that political incitements especially in the electioneering years were another cause of the violence in Laikipia. Politicians would come to Laikipia and in the process of vote hunting, and promise the residents that once elected, they will drive away all the white settlers and the local residents will have pieces of land in the ranches and conservancies [55]. The politicians obviously know it is not possible to do this but it will ignite the urge by local residents to drive away the white settlers from Laikipia, and thus causing the violence. The findings are supported by an observation by Manyara and Eleri [63] forceful invasions of ranches are activated by legislators equipped with evidence that the 99-year tenancies obtained by farmers in Laikipia were about to expire. They therefore incited the herders to attack and inhabit the affected farms with the eventual expectation of possessing these farms. Such incitements contribute to the demolition of belongings, eradication of wildlife and damage of tourism to an area that is an important terminus for thousands of visitors worldwide.

6.1.6. Ethnic Animosity

A study by Warurii [57] established that ethnic animosity was a prime factor in igniting inter-ethnic conflicts in Rumuruti, Laikipia County; as affirmed majority of the of respondents (90.5%). This scenario is provoked by inter-ethnic mistrust and hatred, which sustain stereotype remarks that legitimize violence by some communities against others. Ethnic nationalism quickly translates into undesired ethnocentrism where the warring parties are broadly defined and mobilized in terms of their ethnic groups. This trend of behaviour fits in the views of Furnivall and Smith [64] on the Incompatibility of Plural Society Theory and the heterogeneity-communal hegemon in Azar's PSC theory. This resonates with the situation in the greater Laikipia County, which is prompted by disparities in access to economic resources, which result to ethnic agitations in order to mobilize for quality and articulate their interests.

6.2. Social, Economic, Political and Security Implications of Conflicts in Laikipia County

Conflicts have profound impact on socioeconomic, political and security facets of human society as well as the environment. While some scholars have argued that conflicts can have positive impacts on human society, what is prominent are the negative aspects that can be debilitating to the society. The same is true of conflicts in Laikipia County. The following sub-sub-sections will analyse relevant secondary data relating to socioeconomic, political and security implications conflicts in Laikipia County.

6.2.1. Socioeconomic Implications of Conflicts in Laikipia County

Interviews conducted by Mwenda ([55], p. 57) in Laikipia County revealed that

security situation is worsened due to the residents' reluctance to diversify their economy. This is further corroborated qualitative data by Mkutu in Dol-Dol area in Laikipia North Sub-County confirmed that natural factors similarly led to low food production and depletion of cattle as the pastoralists move from place to place looking for pasture ([46], p. 70). Most of the pastoralists only depend on cattle, which have been diminishing overtime due to drought and diseases. Even though some of the pastoralists have a desire to do farming, the type of soil in their region is not good for cultivation, impeding cultivation. Moreover, lack of consistent rains also hinder farming as it only rains once in a year in most of the regions in Laikipia County and at times after two years. As Warurii [57], observed, this necessitates drought and pastoral movement in search of water and pasture thus leading to conflicts due to convergence of herders at pasture and water areas; or invasion of ranches and farms. The citation is replete with residents' frustrations due to harsh environmental conditions. Irrespective of their hard work, drought impedes diversification and triggers inter-ethnic conflicts due to limited water and grass for their animals.

Those who die during inter-ethnic defence or revenge wars are mostly young and energetic members of the communities'. They leave behind old and other vulnerable groups who cannot cope with the communities' demand for increased food production [57]. At the homestead levels, the ageing participants of the culture take the responsibility of guardians of economic incomes, establish work and control the usage of resource distribution. Their demise, wounds and other extended expressive sufferings throughout the inter-cultural wars eventually contribute to minimized food donations for the affected families. The findings also concur with conclusions by Mwikali and Wafula [49] who observed similar outcomes in Kitui County due to clashes between *Akamba* farmers and *Somali* and/or *Orma* herders. The clashes negatively affected communities' livelihoods as well as national stability and development, as the atmosphere they have created has lowered the quality of life of the resident communities in Kitui County [49].

Research by Mwenda [55] found that the conflicts in Laikipia County have had a far-reaching impact on the state of education in the County. With the increase in the rates of those dropping school was influenced by inter cultural wars, mainly among the youth who enlisted support for the Moran institution, more so especially among the *Maasai* and *Samburu* communities. The coercive forces of the state fight commercial *moranism*, which manifests itself in cattle rustling and banditry and hence make it an unreliable source of income since it thrives on theft and other criminal activities, in contravention of the penal code. However, the Moran institution thrives because of its secretive doctrine, elders and diviner's blessings and use of more advanced weapons than the local state security agents do. The majority of *morans* are recruited from the youth who in turn drop out of school. More often than not, the school dropout youths engage in drug taking and trafficking, stealing, arson, rape and other criminal activities,

which do not complement food production [55]. This situation depletes the progressive levels of the community's source of livelihood.

A study by Mkutu [46] established that ethnic snobbishness breeds the undesirable ethnocentrisms that engenders exile of certain communities from Laikipia County. Fear, insecurity and monumental tension provoked by political polarization and exile of the target communities in Laikipia County discouraged communities from meaningful work of food production [46]. However, this study notes that the challenge of food insecurity in Laikipia County is not only limited to inter-ethnic conflicts. Human-wildlife conflicts are also a factor. This is a fact that is established by Gadd [58] when he found that rogue elephants and buffaloes in unprotected conservancy area caused crop damage and reduced crop yields. Gadd further laments that the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) does not act urgently to address this challenge, with the excuse that tourism was a greater income earner than peasant farming [58]. Based on this the study can surmise that the local community's source of livelihood is further depleted and this will get them into survival mode where hostilities will be directed to those who threatened their survival.

Further findings by Mwenda [55] indicate that socioeconomic effect of conflicts includes the effect on provision of medical services including dispensaries being closed and essential medicines running out. In addition, the education is also affected whereby the attendance in primary school and enrolment in secondary school are is to be dropping. The findings corroborate assertions by Adan and Pkalya, that insecurity leads to a decline in enrolment as only 36.6% of primary school age children were in school while 14.32% were in Secondary school [64]. They also established that there was a positive link between HIV/ AIDs and conflict as well as positive relationship between conflict and violations of women's rights [65].

6.2.2. Political Implications of Conflicts in Laikipia County

A dearth of studies look into political implications of conflicts in Laikipia County in the sense of conflicts influencing political dynamics, Rather existing studies examine the influence of politics and politicians on conflicts in the sense of politics inciting conflicts. Findings by Warurii [57] indicate that conflicts in *Rumuriti*, Laikipia County led to political polarization further feeding into ethnic animosities. This was surmised from responses of 15% of the respondents in his study of interethnic conflicts in *Rumuruti* Division ([57], p. 89). Although to tracing the history of political polarization and ethnic animosity in the county, the study makes mention of some local politicians including Members of County Assembly (MCA) and Members of Parliament (MP) as the perpetrators. The findings corroborates the assertions by Mkutu [46] that political incitement often mutate into violence, which in turn becomes self-perpetuating, geared by revenge attacks on the perceived ethnic community enemies. This is the typical situation in most political generated conflicts in Kenya, and Laikipia County in this case, where politicians take advantage of electorate's ignorance to urge them

into violent acts to stake their grievances.

6.2.3. Security Implications of Conflicts in Laikipia County

From the researches and publications reviewed by this study, it was evident that attempts to examine the security implications of conflicts in Laikipia County were almost non-existent. The studies and documentations have tended to focus on socio-economic aspects with a cursory glance at the political implications; which is more on how politics influences conflicts and not how conflicts influence politics. Notwithstanding this, a research by Omuse [54] examined the effects of cattle rustling in Samburu County on national security as a facet of conflict. He established that impact on national security entailed the issue of proliferation of arms and light weapons for protection purposes. This makes it even harder for the Government of the day to resolve these conflicts, the smuggled arms, light weapons are used to launch attacks, and being loaned to thugs and bandits to carry out their criminal activities in Samburu County and beyond, this greatly affects the national security of Kenya ([54], pp. 61-62). The finding by Omuse [54] confirms arguments by Eaton [66] that local communities use cattle raids as a means of articulating their hostilities towards other communities, which they consider their enemies. The same can be surmised for Laikipia County situation where the pastoralists poses arms which have not been issued by the government and thus they have abrogated the duty of guaranteeing security unto themselves.

6.3. Conflict Management Approaches Employed in Laikipia County

The government of any state is charged with ensuring security of its territory and citizens. This is well espoused in the Hobbesian social contract philosophy which posits that for the maintenance of a society and social order, the citizens voluntarily agree to surrender some of their rights and freedom to the sovereign with guarantee that their security and welfare will be looked after by the sovereign. Following this line of thought and justification, it is incumbent upon the National Government of Kenya and the county government of Laikipia to ensure they meet their end of the contract and ensure the citizen fulfil their part. The subsequent sub-sub-sections will attempt to present the findings by researchers in this respect; and where necessary relate it to Laikipia County.

6.3.1. The commitment of the Government on Conflict Resolution

Findings by Omuse [54] in Samburu County established that 56.25% of the respondents feel that the Government of Kenya (GoK) is committed to resolving conflicts in Baragoi area while 43.75% felt that the GoK was not committed to resolving conflicts in Baragoi area. The findings are relevant to Laikipia County in the sense that the Government of Kenya has the responsibility to find solutions to conflicts. In addition, Samburu County bears some resemblance to Laikipia County in terms of resource conflicts as well as the issue of cattle rustling. As noted by Mkutu [67] there has been an increase in cattle rustling since lead-

ing to high levels of human casualties. Mwendwa [55] also observes that state machinery (GoK) has been fighting these vice that has been endemic among the *morans* in Laikipia County. This therefore links the findings by Omuse [54] in Samburu County to the situation in Laikipia County and the government efforts to address the issues. The government machinery includes the KDF, NPS and the County Security and Intelligence Committee. Ongoing operations in Laikipia prominently features the KDF who are engaging as CIMIC approach to conflict management.

6.3.2. Attempted Conflict Resolution Approaches

Different conflict methodologies are only effective with good timing and interfacing. As Warurii [57] observes, both formal and informal approaches have been used to settle inter-ethnic conflicts in Laikipia County. Such approaches are not wholly independent but are also overlapping. Warurii [57] found that the use of Humanitarian Assistance and by extension Humanitarian Agencies takes the preponderance of methods employed at 20%. The next mostly employed approaches are dialogue, peace meetings, sports and cultural events, public awareness and disarmament at 10% each. The respondents of the study by Warurii [57] indicated that mediations, peace workshops, arbitration, psychosocial counselling, stock branding and stock embargo were employed at 5%. Whereas these measures are important for conflict resolution in the county, it is not apparent if they identify and address the root causes. They appear to focus on surface factors rather than issues of land grievances, marginalization and lack of employment opportunities. They leave the real grievances outstanding and thus the opportunity for conflict recurrence. This was observed by Mutunga [56] who noted that such approaches have failed in achieving sustainable peaceful coexistence among the communities in such areas due to lack of a holistic approach toward resource-based management in Laikipia County. However, some animal grazing agreement exists between ranchers and pastoralists.

6.3.3. Effectiveness of Attempted Peace Initiatives

The study by Omuse [54] further sought to establish how effective the peace initiatives in the resolving conflicts in Samburu County. It was established that that various peace-initiatives employed by GoK in Samburu was either effective or least effective. This is because 37.5% respondents felt that they were effective, 31.25% respondents felt that they were least effective. Those who felt that government initiatives were very effective accounted for a paltry 18.75% and 12.5% felt that they were effective. These sentiments are relatable to Laikipia County as evidenced by the persistence of violent conflict episodes despite various intervention measures by the GoK, NGOs, and CSOs. It is the analysis of this study that whereas the GoK's conflict resolution and mitigation efforts are commendable, they have not been able to result into long-term conflict reduction. This is in concurrence with an assertion by Bercovitch [50], who argued that the resolution of a conflict occurs when the root causes are adequately addressed; thus denying the threat of greater conflict-generating behaviour. The recurrence of the

conflicts in Laikipia County and its protracted nature indicates that the root causes, such as the land tenure question, have not been adequately addressed. This makes recurrence of conflicts in Laikipia County inevitable and protracted, as posited by the Protracted Social Conflict theory Azar [14].

Further relating to the aspect of effectiveness of conflict management approaches especially at County level, Mutunga [56] observed that the main approaches that have been used in Laikipia County are mutual security guarantees amongst conflicting groups, and the support of customary resolution mechanisms to resource-based conflicts. The approaches have failed in achieving sustainable peaceful coexistence among the communities in such areas due to lack of a holistic approach toward resource-based management in the County. She concludes by indicting Laikipia County Government for lack of proper policy framework for conflict management; that creates joint efforts by all stakeholders [56]. While the functions of security are the ambit of the National government under part 1 of the fourth schedule of the Constitution ([68], pp. 174-177), County government are critical and should have a vital role to play especially those responsible for conflict prone area such as Laikipia County.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that the LIC in Laikipia bears attributes of PSC and the conflict resolution measures thus far applied have not been alive to this. Thus, a paradigmatic recast of Laikipia conflicts analysis along the lines of PSC, and intractable conflicts, is crucial for formulation of relevant and effective solutions. The recommendations by the paper are specific to government agencies that are deemed responsible for conflict management in Kenya. Therefore, the study recommended that in order to promote long term peace in Laikipia County, Laikipia County government needs to develop a comprehensive conflict resolution policy framework nested on a national conflict management policy, comprising a mixture of formal and traditional approaches, to address land tenure and marginalisation which are the core causes of conflict. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior should deploy permanent and well-equipped security agencies in the Multi-Agency Approach framework, including a robust intelligence framework for early warning, to prevent proliferation of small arms and reduce criminal activities. Finally, the National Government needs to establish a permanent vetting board chaired by the Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) and Director National Intelligence Service (NIS) to continuously vet leaders in order to enhance compliance with Chapter 6 of the Kenyan constitution 2010.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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