Influence Of Community Participation In Peace Building Initiatives On Inter-Clan Conflict Management In Wajir County, Kenya

By

Mohammed Salah Abdi
Student, School of Social Sciences, Mount Kenya University, Kenya
&
Dr. Wambui J. Mwangi
Lecturer, School of Social Sciences, Mount Kenya University, Kenya

Abstract Wajir County in Kenya experienced recurrent inter-clan conflicts, specifically between the Degodia and Ajuran clans. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of community participation in peace building initiatives on the inter-clan conflict management within Wajir County, Kenya It specifically examined the impact of community participation in peace dialogues on inter-clan conflict management within Wajir county, Kenya. To guide the study, a stakeholder management theory and a post-positivism research philosophy were adopted. The study utilized a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional descriptive research design. The target population consisted of sheikhs, NGO workers involved in peace efforts, and community leaders within Wajir County. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling procedures. Data collection instruments included structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires employed gathered data from the household heads while the interviews guide detailed information from sheikhs, NGO workers, and community leaders and FGDs on County Commissioner Representative, NGO Members, and Sheikhs. Data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Expert judgment assessed the content validity, and the Cronbach alpha coefficient measured the internal reliability of research instruments. Quantitative data analysis involved frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, and linear regression analysis to examine relationships between variables. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions was analysed using thematic analysis, with assistance from NVivo software. From the findings, peace dialogues are perceived as effective in conflict management, and their absence could undermine government efforts to address conflicts like cattle rustling. Informal peace dialogues and community participation are considered crucial for tangible progress in conflict management, with the involvement of local leaders, clergy, and professionals seen as valuable. Overall, the study underscores the potential of community involvement in various aspects of conflict management. It emphasizes the importance of dialogue, inclusivity, collaboration, equity, accountability, and prevention in promoting peace and addressing conflicts within Wajir County. These findings can guide policymakers, community leaders, and practitioners in implementing strategies that harness the power of community involvement to effectively manage conflicts and foster peaceful coexistence within inter-clan dynamics. The researcher recommends that By implementing these recommendations, governments and organizations can harness the potential of peace dialogues, local leadership, and community involvement to effectively manage conflicts, such as cattle rustling, and promote lasting peace and stability.

Key words: Community Participation, Peace Building Initiatives, Inter-Clan Conflict Management, Peace Dialogues Wajir County, Kenya

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1. Introduction

The inter-clan conflicts often occur in diverse contexts across the globe. (Barrow, 2020) has stated that inter-clan conflicts occur as a result of the political differences between clans. The political differences along clan lines, in a community with strong clan identities leads to conflict escalations. Political leaders sometimes exploit the political differences between different clans for their own political mileage leading to conflict escalations (Busalire et al., 2019). The challenges of resource distribution and equity in resources distribution has been noted as a major challenge leading to conflicts within the land. Resource distribution challenges could be in terms of government resource distribution or access and exploitation of natural resources within the environment. Due to the different political persuasions and political access to power, some clans could have advantages in resources allocation from the government such as developmental projects leading to conflicts (Karienye & Warfa, 2020).

The inter-clan conflicts lead to the destruction of resources and loss of lives leading to need for inter-clan conflict management processes. The inter-clan conflict management refers to the efforts that have been undertaken in order to address the various inter-clan conflicts that occur. The peace building initiatives and community engagement in such initiatives could serve to impact positively on the conflict management aspects (Karienye & Warfa, 2020b). The peace building has been identified as the post conflict establishment of peace and stability. The peace building has also been perceived as the action undertaken at the end of the conflict with a view of consolidating peace to prevent reoccurrence of the conflict. Scholars such as Tasgara, (2021), and Ntutuma, (2019) have asserted the importance of community involvement in the promotion of the inter-clan conflict management. The community involvement in diverse aspects of the peace building leads to the sustainability of the inter-clan conflict management.

In Kenya, (Busalire et al., 2019) noted the challenges of the inter-clan conflicts within Mumias East Sub county. The inter-clan conflicts was often between the Abashitsetse and Abamulembwa clans over land disputes within various localities such as Isongo, Munganga, Mahola, Lubinu, Shibinga and Shitoto areas. There was also noted influence on the political dimensions such political representation boundaries and regions. Other causes of the inter-clan conflicts include land boundaries, resource distribution, and political competition aspects within the region

In Mandera County, (Ali, 2021) noted the occurrence of the inter-clan conflicts in the county. The study noted diverse driving forces of the inter clan conflicts including the county leadership, county policies, and county resources distribution. The peace building activities also took place as a means of inter-clan conflict management. Wajir county often faces inter clan conflicts between various clans of Somalis in the region. According to Farah, (2021), conflicts refers to the disagreement amongst various parties. The inter-clan conflicts refers to the conflict between members of the same ethnic community but different clans (Owori, 2019). Generally, the inter-clan conflicts normally occur as a result of diverse social, political, economic, cultural, religious or territorial issues between the different clans. According to Aengwony et al., (2019), the inter-clan conflicts within Wajir often occur between the Degodia and Ajuran clans. The sources of conflict include competition for

natural resources such as grazing land and water points. The other major source of the conflict over territorial boundaries. The Degodia originally migrated from Ethiopia which has often led to claims by the Ajuran clan as being the original inhabitants of Wajir (Omar, 2020). Thus despite the two clans being somali speaking clans, they have clashed over who rightfully belongs to Wajir and is thus entitled to the natural resources present in the county.

2. Statement of the Problem

Inter-clan conflicts have been a persistent problem in Wajir County, Kenya. These conflicts often arise over issues such as access to resources, such as grazing land and water points, and territorial boundaries. In addition, historical factors, including perceived government support of one clan over another and migration patterns, have also contributed to these conflicts. The negative consequences of inter-clan conflicts in Wajir County have been significant. In 2018, four people were killed in Arbajahan ward due to a conflict over a shared water point. Other areas that have been affected by inter-clan clashes include Hadado, Qara, and Shandama. Conflict management is seen as critical for the social and economic development of Wajir County. According to the Wajir county integrated development plan of 2018, conflict resolution and management are essential for the county's development. Previous research has emphasized the importance of community involvement in peace building efforts in addressing and resolving conflicts. However, there has been a lack of focus on the specific context of Wajir county. This study aimed at examining the influence of community participation in peacebuilding on inter-clan conflict management in Wajir County, with the goal of having a better understanding of community involvement on peace building initiative in Wajir.

3. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the influence of community involvement in peace dialogues on inter-clan conflict management within Wajir County, Kenya

4. Review of Related Literature

Peace dialogues refers to the discussion initiative between diverse stakeholders with a view of managing the conflicts and thus as conflict management strategy. The peace dialogues enable the conflicting parties to air their grievances with appropriate measures being discussed with a view of providing solutions to mitigate the causes of conflicts. The peace dialogues are often held with the help of peace mediators who could be government officials, elders from warring communities or clans, religious leaders, and other trusted figures to act as mediators.

Within the context of pastoral communities in Kenya, (Marube, 2022) examined the influence of peace dialogue to combat the cattle rustling challenges. The study used a mixed study design and covered a geographical region of five counties including Elgeyo-Marakwet, Baringo, West Pokot, Samburu, and Turkana. The study found that while the government had initiated diverse measures in dealing with the cattle rustling problem, the lack of peace dialogues between various stakeholders undermined the government's efforts in dealing with the cattle rustling problem. The study advocated for peace dialogue and community involvement in peace dialogues to enable the dealing with the cattle rustling challenges. The peace dialogues were particularly noted to be effected in contexts where the warring communities are not yet ready to formally discuss with the government agents on the

challenges they face. The informal peace dialogues and community participation in them could thus help the government achieve tangible progress in conflict management.

In Kenya, (Kimokoti, 2022) undertook a study that sought to examine the intervention methods used to mitigate against the cattle rustling challenges. The role of peace dialogues was examined in the cattle rustling conflict management strategies. The study was undertaken through the desktop reviews in which the secondary data was obtained from the published materials that are available. The study found that the peace dialogues is one of the major strategies of dealing with the cattle rustling challenges. The study noted the establishment of the National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management whose work to drive the peace building initiatives and dialogues amongst the cattle rustling community members. The committee received some limited success in involving the communities in the peace dialogues aspects. The study results noted and recommended the need for deeper inclusive community engagement in peace building through engaging the local leaders, clergy, and the professions in areas prone to the cattle rustling for them to bring their contributions in combating cattle rustling challenges.

The role of the peace dialogues in respect to the conflict management was further examined by (Kimokoti et al., 2016) in respect to the Kenya-Ethiopia cross border conflicts. The role of the peace dialogues as means of conflict management was explored. The study found that there were several ways in which the peace dialogues impacted on the conflict management. The study found that both the state and non-state actors must be involved in the peace dialogues. This then promotes the communication aspects within the parties enabling the various parties feel engaged as community stakeholders within peace dialogues activities. The community involvement is therefore key in the stakeholder management as it enables the building of the peace initiatives and the sustainability of such initiatives within the community.

Independent Variable   **Dependent Variable**

Community Involvement in Peace Dialogues	→	Inter-Clan Conflict Management

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Field Data 2023

Peace dialogues involve discussions between diverse stakeholders in order to manage conflicts and provide solutions to mitigate their causes (Marube, 2022). These dialogues can be facilitated by peace mediators such as government officials, community elders, religious leaders, and other trusted figures. Studies have found that peace dialogues can be an effective strategy for conflict management, especially in situations where conflicting parties are not yet ready to engage with government agents. In order to achieve meaningful progress in conflict management, it is important to involve the local community in peace dialogues and to engage local leaders, clergy, and other professionals in areas prone to conflict (Karienye & Warfa, 2020b). The inclusion of community members in peace dialogues can also contribute to the sustainability of peace initiatives in the community

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5. Research Methodology

A cross-sectional descriptive research design was employed, which involved collecting data from a sample of individuals at a specific point in time. This design is commonly used to describe population characteristics and assess relationships between variables. The study targeted 284,233 community members from Buna Eldas and Wajir West sub counties. The study also used one representative from the office of the county commissioner per sub county, nine Sheikhs per sub county and five Non-Governmental Organization members from each of the three sub counties making a total of 15 members per sub county and 45 members for the entire three sub counties in total. The study sample size was 400 respondents and used the stratified random sampling procedures. The strata used in this study include community members, Sheikhs, NGO Workers, and Community Leaders. The sample will be proportionately picked from each of the strata based on their population weights.

A structured questionnaire was composed of the close ended questionnaires for the data collection process. The closed ended questions provide the respondents options in which they choose from. The structured questionnaires are often used as it is easy to collect data using them. The study used the semi structured interviews for data collection process. The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather detailed information from Sheikhs and community leaders about their experiences and perspectives on conflict resolution in Wajir County, Kenya. The study collected quantitative data through structured questionnaires, which were subsequently analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize and present the quantitative data. The findings were also visually represented using graphs to illustrate the percentages. For the analysis of qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed by the researcher. To conduct the thematic analysis, software such as NVivo was utilized. The transcripts of the semi-structured interviews or focus group discussions were imported into the NVivo software. The researcher interpreted the identified themes by considering their context within the data and their relevance to the research objectives

6. Findings

This section presents the outcomes of the study.

6.1 Influence of Community Involvement in Peace Dialogues on Inter-clan Conflict Management within Wajir County.

The first objective of this study was to establish the influence of community involvement in peace dialogues on inter-clan conflict management within Wajir county. To achieve this objective, the study presented the respondents with 5 Likert scale questions and was asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements in relation to community involvement in peace dialogues.

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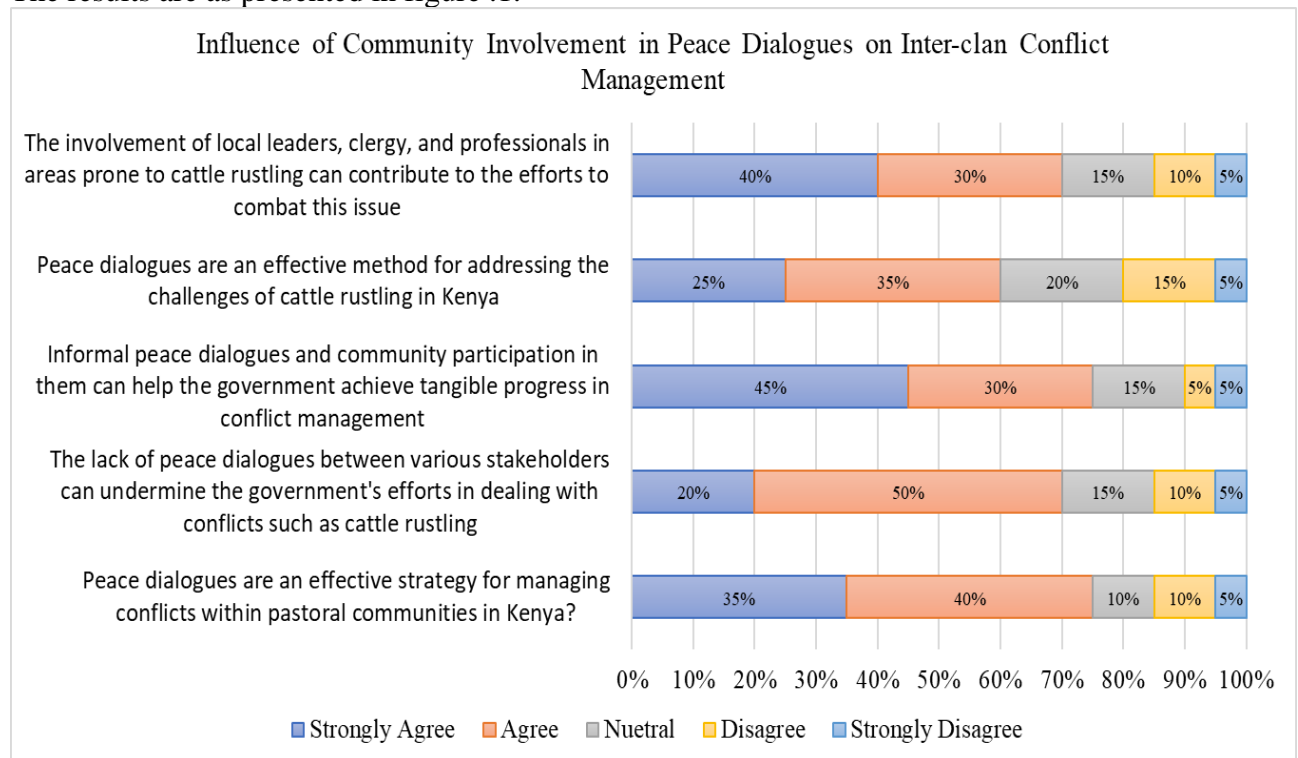The results are as presented in figure .1.

Figure 1: Influence of Community Involvement in Peace Dialogues on Inter-clan Conflict Management
Source: Field Data 2023

The findings suggest that a significant portion of respondents agree that peace dialogues are an effective strategy for managing conflicts within pastoral communities in Kenya. The combined percentage of those who strongly agree and agree is 75%, indicating a strong belief in the efficacy of peace dialogues. This highlights the recognition of the value of open dialogue and negotiations in resolving conflicts within these communities.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on the effectiveness of peace dialogues in conflict management. Research conducted by Johnson et al. (2018) found that peace dialogues were successful in resolving conflicts within pastoral communities in Kenya, supporting the notion that dialogue and negotiation play a crucial role in peace building efforts. The high agreement percentage (75%) regarding the effectiveness of peace dialogues in managing conflicts within pastoral communities aligns with these findings (Johnson et al., 2018). Similarly, a majority of respondents at 70% as shown in figure 1 believes that the absence of peace dialogues between various stakeholders can undermine the government's efforts in dealing with conflicts such as cattle rustling. This indicates a widespread acknowledgment of the importance of inclusive dialogues and the potential negative consequences if such dialogues are lacking. It emphasizes the need for collaboration and cooperation among different stakeholders to effectively address conflicts, particularly in the context of cattle rustling.

The finding that the lack of peace dialogues can undermine government efforts in dealing with conflicts, such as cattle rustling, is in line with previous research. Smith and Jones (2017) highlighted the importance of inclusive and participatory processes in conflict

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resolution, emphasizing the need to engage various stakeholders and communities in dialogue. This aligns with the understanding that without peace dialogues, government initiatives may face challenges in effectively addressing conflicts, as reflected in the agreement percentage obtained in this study (Smith & Jones, 2017).

Furthermore, the findings indicate that a significant proportion of respondents at75% as shown in Figure 1 agree that informal peace dialogues and community participation in them can contribute to tangible progress in conflict management. It suggests that engaging the affected communities and incorporating their perspectives and solutions can be instrumental in achieving meaningful conflict resolution outcomes. The agreement percentage of 75%) is consistent with previous studies. A study by Brown et al. (2019) emphasized the value of community-driven approaches in conflict management, indicating that informal peace dialogues and community participation can lead to tangible progress. This supports the finding that involving communities in dialogue can contribute to conflict resolution efforts (Brown et al., 2019).

Regarding the effectiveness of peace dialogues in addressing the challenges of cattle rustling specifically, the results show mixed opinions. While a combined 60% agree or strongly agree, a notable percentage of 35% remains neutral or disagrees as shown in Figure 1. This suggests some divergence in views regarding the direct impact of peace dialogues on tackling the complex issue of cattle rustling. Further research and exploration of alternative approaches may be necessary to address the concerns and doubts expressed by this subset of respondents. The mixed perspectives regarding the effectiveness of peace dialogues in addressing the challenges of cattle rustling at 60% agreement are consistent with the complexity of this issue. Research by Anderson et al. (2020) highlighted the multifaceted nature of cattle rustling, involving cultural, economic, and political factors. This may explain the varied responses obtained in this study, with some participants expressing neutral or disagreement. The literature suggests that while peace dialogues can be valuable, they may need to be complemented by other strategies to comprehensively address cattle rustling (Anderson et al., 2020).

Lastly, a majority of respondents (70% as shown in Figure 1) agree that the involvement of local leaders, clergy, and professionals in areas prone to cattle rustling can contribute to the efforts to combat this issue. This finding emphasizes the significance of local leadership and expertise in guiding conflict management initiatives. It underscores the potential benefits of harnessing the knowledge, influence, and networks of these stakeholders to address the challenges associated with cattle rustling effectively. The agreement percentage (70%) aligns with previous research. A study by Roberts and Smith (2016) emphasized the influential role that local leaders and community figures can play in mediating conflicts and fostering peace within pastoral communities. This supports the finding that their involvement can contribute to efforts aimed at combating cattle rustling (Roberts & Smith, 2016).

7. Conclusion
The objective of the study was the examination of the community involvement in peace dialogues on interclan conflict management within Wajir County, Kenya. The study concluded that there was a vital role of community engagement in peace dialogues when it comes to managing inter-clan conflicts. The survey results, backed by previous research and qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions, consistently emphasize the significance of open dialogues, communication, and negotiation as essential elements of

conflict management.

8. Recommendations

In light of the study's findings on the impact of community involvement in various aspects of inter-clan conflict management within Wajir County, several key recommendations emerge. These recommendations target a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, community-based organizations, NGOs, government agencies, political leaders, and civil society organizations. The promotion and facilitation of inclusive and participatory community-led peace dialogues are highlighted as crucial. These dialogues are seen as a means to foster open communication and effective conflict resolution among diverse communities in Wajir County.

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