

An Anatomy of Participation of Pastoralists in Land Governance: Reflections from the Maasai in Chemba and Kondoa Districts, Tanzania

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Abstract

Literature on participation of pastoralists in governance lacks in-depth qualitative information on the quality of their participation and the dynamics behind it. This article mends the gap by qualitatively investigating the dynamics of participation of Maasai pastoralists in land governance in Tanzania. The study involved 72 interviews with pastoralists, two (2) key informant interviews, and two Focus group discussions that included 16 participants. A desk review and observations triangulated interviews and key informant interviews. The data garnered in this study underwent content analysis and was descriptively discussed. Findings fundamentally suggest that participation of the Maasai pastoralists in land governance is low in terms of active participation in meetings, holding leadership positions, and influencing land-related decisions. Such a situation is attributed to Maasai cultural norms and values, power relations, and incentives which restrict and/or compel most of them to have limited participation in governance. As such, understanding participation of pastoralists in land governance, and devising means to improve the quality of their participation require an eclectic approach that takes on board the substantive and descriptive forces surrounding participation of pastoralists in land governance.

Keywords: Maasai, Pastoralists, Participation, Governance, and Land.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Inclusive land governance in pastoral societies has been a growing concern among academicians (Krätli & Toulmin, 2021; Massoi, 2019). This is partly because pastoralism involves raising countless animals on vast rangelands that make up around 40% of the world's surface, thereby constituting the major source of income for millions of people worldwide (Dong, 2016). Equally important, pastoral activities contribute significantly to national economies, and their interactions with agriculturalists sometimes cause conflicts that catch the attention of law enforcement organs (Mabebe, 2022; Mbih, 2020; Scoones, 2021). Likewise, pastoralists are highly affected by land

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acquisition and use despite the presence of legislations that provide equal opportunities for participation in the management, acquisition, and use of land (Rweyemamu, 2019; Massoi, 2019).

Literature on participation of pastoralists in land governance worldwide suggests limited inclusion of pastoralists, which affects their socio-cultural status of land, historical memory, and identity (Kenney-Lazar & Mark, 2021; Po & Heng, 2019). Such a situation is attributed to the status of pastoralist lands, and land use practices associated with their shifting cultivation and wandering for pastures (Flintan, 2020; Massoi, 2019). Also, demand for renewable energy and forest governance initiatives like Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), and Payments for Forest Ecosystem Services (PFES) make forestry a lucrative venture (Heyward, 2021). The growing interest in pastoralists' land for renewable energy and forestation ignites conflicts between pastoral communities and investors, which makes inclusion of pastoralists in land governance imperative for maintenance of their land, livelihood, and socio-cultural fabric (Batterbury & Ndi, 2018; Theodory, 2017).

Discussions on participation in governance by and large revolve around descriptive and substantive involvement in governance matters (Malipula, 2022). Descriptive participation entails having a share in or taking part in governance endeavours (Salum & Malipula, 2023). Such conceptualisation of participation coined in the context of pastoralists entails physical presence or representation of pastoralists in land governance forums; but overlooks the roles that participants play in representing their interests in such forums (Mouter et al., 2021). With the descriptive disposition of participation, less can be known about the dynamics of participation beyond physical presence (numbers).

The substantive understanding of participation of pastoralists, which this study buys into, compliments the descriptive view by arguing that representatives in decision-making organs shall make them have a voice to champion and subsequently influence their interests in decision-making processes (Malipula, 2022). The substantive view entails that participation of pastoralists in land governance should be explored by looking into the role they play in setting land-related agendas, the influence(s) that they have in making land-related decisions that suit their wants and needs, as well as taking an active role in the implementation of the decisions made. Having highlighted the two opposing views on analysing participation, it can be said that solely focusing on either of the two would provide misleading conclusions about the dynamics (how and why) of participation of pastoralists in governance. As such, both the descriptive and substantive theoretical postulations and empirical foundations addressing quantitative and qualitative aspects of participation were used to understand participation of Maasai pastoralists in land governance in Tanzania.

Maasai pastoralists, including those in Kondoa and Chemba, are a unique group characterised as ‘disadvantaged’ by socio-economic and political criteria, and less involved in local governance decision-making (Misafi & Malipula, 2016). Such a position is anchored on the fact that Maasai pastoralists have unique nomadic cultural, economic, and age-set political orientations (Theodory & Malipula, 2017). Such a situation merits a specific analysis to understand their livelihood endeavours and interactions with others in the broader socio-political sphere to understand their participation in land governance (Rweyemamu, 2019). Despite the peculiarity of the Maasai and the need to carefully research their participation in land governance, little empirical data on the subject exists in general, and far less that looks at the group from combined descriptive and substantive theoretical lenses (Misafi, 2014; Rweyemamu, 2019). Masoi (2015) dealt with issues of acquisition and use of land among the Maasai in Kilosa District from a gendered perspective. Likewise, Misafi (2014) undertook a gendered investigation of participation of pastoral and non-pastoral women in decentralised local governance. However, the two studies never concentrated on issues of land governance among pastoral communities as a whole.

The Maasai pastoralists, including those in Kondoa and Chemba, are affected by land-related conflicts with farmers revolving around land acquisition and use which affects their socio-cultural status of the land, historical memory, and identity as purported by Kenney-Lazar & Mark (2021). It is only logical to look into how pastoralists in Kondoa and Chemba participate in finding solutions to the problems in governance circles that provide space for them to do so. Against this backdrop, this study goes beyond descriptive explanations of Maasai pastoralists by unveiling how they participate in managing land in their areas; and why they participate the way they do. Interest is placed in determining participation of pastoralists in land use planning, vying for leadership positions in land committees and attendance in meetings, as well as seeking information about land issues to improve their chances of influencing their interests in land governance. Informed by the dynamics of participation of Maasai pastoral societies and implications thereof, we suggest relevant approaches to guarantee participation of Maasai pastoralists in land governance matters.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 Pastoralists, Maasai Pastoralists and their Participation in Land Governance

Pastoralists are among minority groups that have a special affiliation with their land that transcends economic interests (Krätli & Toulmin, 2021). The community comprises men and women born and brought up in a society whose central livelihood system revolves around livestock keeping and is governed by unique nomadic cultural values. They thus place unwavering value on political,

cultural, and spiritual acquaintances in the land that harbours places that provide the essence of their existence for generations (Hayward, 2021). As such, staying, working, and nurturing their land with the security of tenure is imperative for living fully. Therefore, grabbing land from them dents their distinct identity and sense of uniqueness (Lazar & Mark, 2021). The unique cultural values of pastoralists attached to land merit their inclusion in land governance so that they can air their particularistic experiences and demands in decision-making bodies to carve their destinies (Krätli & Toulmin, 2021).

Maasai pastoralists belong to a Nilotic ethnic group found in the Eastern part of Africa, particularly in northern Tanzania and others in northern, central, and southern Kenya. Livestock keeping is their economic mainstay. The Maasai pastoralists are an archetypal nomadic society whose members dress distinctively, live in ad hoc structures, move substantially in search of pasture, and are known internationally for living around national parks and feeding their livestock in the same (Archambault et al., 2020; Misafi, 2014). They are traditionally organised around an Age-set political system informed by pastoral cultures which accord elder males (the wisest age group) the exclusive role of representing pastoralists in decision-making circles (Misafi & Malipula, 2016). Their leadership is not formally recognised by the formal local government system; but they interact once in a while when the official local government system needs to mobilise them to participate in development endeavours (Massoi, 2015). The decrees of ecological conditions and the needs of their livestock shape their daily way of life; and inform their social norms and culture (Theodory & Malipula, 2017). As such, Maasai are de facto politically, socially, and culturally influenced by pastoral norms and culture. This is the case even though they are required to abide by national laws, rules, and regulations governing a state, as it is for other citizens (Misafi & Malipula, 2016). Owing to the requirement to abide by the national dos and don'ts, Maasai pastoralists are expected to actively participate in shaping laws and policies to ensure that their interests are factored into local government plans, including land use-related plans.

Participation in simple terms means someone or a group of people having a stake in or taking part in a particular activity (Malipula, 2022; Johansson, 2021). It takes place in different forms and/or levels of an activity; and can be measured by the degree to which stakeholders are involved/not involved in making decisions. Arnstein (1969) contends that there are three forms of participation: non-participation, partial participation, and genuine participation. Non-participation entails decisions made by officials and experts without involvement of stakeholders. In partial participation, stakeholders are merely consulted about decisions that are to be made; instead of

taking an active role in making the decisions. Genuine participation entails active involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes; and in the implementation of the decisions made.

Likewise, Arnstein contends that there is a ladder of participation that has three levels- level one, level two, and level three. Level one, which is considered to be the uppermost level in the Arnsteins's participation ladder, is characterised by stakeholders actively taking part in decision-making processes; and their opinions hold water. Level two is characterised by involvement of a limited number of stakeholders in the decision-making process while the majority of the stakeholders are merely informed about the decisions made, and the course of action that they have to take following the decisions made by the chosen few. Level three, which is considered to be the lowest level of participation on Arnstein's participation ladder, is characterised by non-involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes. The stakeholders at this level are forced to follow decisions made by others without questioning. Agarwal (2010) essentially buys into Arnstein's levels of participation but compliments them as Table 1 succinctly exhibits.

Table 1. Agarwal's Levels of Participation

Level	Characteristics
Nominal	Merely being a member of a group without taking part in decision-making
Passive	Having participants who are informed of decisions after they are made or attend decision-making meetings without contributing anything to deliberations
Consultative	Having participants who are asked to provide opinions without any assurance that their opinions will influence decisions
Activity specific	Having participants who are asked to undertake a specific task(s)
Active	Having participants who can express their opinions once solicited or out their initiatives
Interactive/empowering	Having participants with an active voice and ability to influence decisions as well as holding positions of power and authority key in governance circles.

Source: Agarwal (2010:172).

Agarwal's levels of participation, as is the case with Arnstein, are hierarchical; the lowest being the nominal level and the highest the interactive level. Deeply analysed, Agarwal unpacks Arnstein's levels of participation into six levels as opposed to the three propounded by Arnstein. Agarwal contends that the level of participation enhances as one climbs the levels upwards, and the opposite is the case when one descends. The levels of participation presented above suggest that participation is not uniform, and can be classified into various levels and measured. In the current study, Agarwal's levels of participation will guide our analysis of participation of pastoralists in land governance because they complement Arnstein's, and are comparatively elaborate to cater for analysis of participation of members of a complex livelihood like Maasai pastoralists in land governance.

2.2 A glance at the Framework for Participation of Pastoralists in Land Governance in Tanzania

In Tanzania, where pastoralism is among the key means of livelihood, the National Land Use Planning Commission Guidelines (2011) considers pastoralists as a vulnerable group that needs special care due to threats from farmers who disrespect them. The vulnerability is anchored on the fact that pastoralists have experienced numerous forceful evictions from their traditional lands to provide room for creation or expansion of game reserves, national parks, large-scale farming, and commercial game hunting (Barasa, 2014). These evictions take place despite the existence of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania which recognises equality to own property for all citizens. The National Land Policy (1995), the 1999 Land Act, revised in 2019, and other relevant Acts like the Land Act (1999) provide for equitable access to land to all citizens. Importantly, sometimes pastoralism is viewed as a constraint to land management and development due to pastoralists' nomadic ways of life and unsustainable land use practices (Misafi & Malipula, 2016; Massoi, 2015).

Participation of pastoralists in land governance in Tanzania is highly exercised within Local Government Authorities (LGAs). Such a view is evidenced by Tanzania's National Land Policy (1995) and the Village Land Act (1999), which provide responsibilities related to land use planning, distribution, and management to LGAs through land officials and political organs responsible for land matters. Concerning land-use planning and management in village areas where pastoral societies are located, the Land Use Planning Act 2007 and its corresponding guidelines require the preparation of land-use schemes to be consultative, fully approved by competent organs, and made available to the general public. The said Act and its associated guidelines for land planning and management require village plans to originate from the land users in villages, who are the potential victims of land questions like land conflicts and degradation, as well as the beneficiaries of improved land management (Huggins, 2016). However, the capacity of villagers to play an active role is wanting as most schemes are drawn by public authorities and approved by people's representatives in LGAs without fully involving the public due to the urgency of implementation of the schemes (Malipula, 2022). This situation concurs with Theodory (2017), who contends that understanding of land use schemes is normally reserved to limited officials, which subsequently inform unprofessional land use behaviours like allocation of open spaces to private use.

The views on limited participation in land governance are in line with Archambault et al. (2020), who contend that substantive participation in local governance, including in issues related to land, is guaranteed by legislations that are not practised. In the main, the legislations strive to balance the

number of representatives in local government decision-making organs without enhancing substantive participation, as scant empirical evidence exists to support the association between adding numbers of participants and substantive participation (Malipula, 2022). Malipula insists that formal and informal political machinations within local governments determine the participants who take the central stage and benefit in governance domains. Inferably, the formal and informal machinations may implicitly or explicitly exclude pastoralists from decision-making processes and thus undermine and/or bypass the formal rules and procedures for participation provided by the land management legal and regulatory framework accentuated above. Agarwal's analytical frame was used to analyse participation of Maasai pastoralists in land governance within the frame delineated in this section.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This article employed an ethnographic-inspired qualitative case study design to explore the dynamics of participation of pastoralists in land governance in Kondoa and Chemba Districts. The applied design warrants in-depth descriptions and analysis of a single case like participation of pastoralists in land governance (Takahashi & Araujo, 2020). Equally important, the design permits the examination of a phenomenon within its natural setting through multiple data sources suitable for answering “how” and “why” questions embedded in qualitative studies like the current one (Salum & Malipula, 2023). The study was conducted in Kondoa and Chemba districts, Dodoma region, whose economic mainstay involves both crop production and livestock rearing. The two districts harbour several minority/nomadic predominantly pastoral ethnic groups, including the Sandawe, Maasai, and Barbaig and others like Gogo and Nyaturu, whose participation in local governance has proven to be limited (Misafi, 2014). The socioeconomic characteristics of Kondoa and Chemba inhabitants merit the choice to provide insights into the participation of pastoralists in land governance in a heterogeneous setting with existing problems of participation of pastoralists in Local governance decision-making.

The study employed a multistage sampling procedure to select the studied sample. Through the aid of Livestock Officers in the studied districts, the study purposely selected two pastoral-dominant wards, namely Gwandi and Mrijo in Chemba; and Kondoa LGA. The wards were identified by Council Livestock Officials. Four pastoral dominant villages (two from each ward) were purposely selected from the identified Wards. At this level, Ward Officials, based on the dominance of livestock in the area, identified the sampled villages. From Gwandi Ward, Gwandi and Rofati villages were selected, while Mrijo Ward was represented by Magasa and Olboloti villages. A total

of 72 pastoral households (18 from each village) were randomly selected. Then, one pastoralist from each randomly selected pastoral household was selected based on their availability.

It is worth noting that at the time of the research, both pastoral men and women were in their households because pastures were available, and eventually 39 pastoral women and 33 pastoral men were involved. The randomness in the selection of households and participants was meant to enhance representativeness. The number of participants was enough to reach the saturation point which is imperative for qualitative studies (Vasileiou et al., 2018). The saturation point entails the addition of a sample size that cannot generate new information. The study also purposely garnered views from two (2) Key Informants (KIs) - key people in land governance matters in the study area. The KIs purposely selected in the current study were the Ward Executive Officers. The study also conducted two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); one with eight (8) pastoral women, and another with eight (8) pastoral men selected with the assistance of village leaders.

Key informant interviews (KIIs), FGDs, and participant observation were employed to garner data. Interviews and FGDs using interview guides sought to obtain data on how and why pastoralists participated or did not participate in land governance decision-making. On the other hand, observations were meant to unveil pastoralists' attendance and contributions in public meetings. KIIs helped to supplement and cross-check the information gathered through interviews, FGDs, and participant observations. The primary data gathered from interviews and observations were supplemented with reviews of journal articles, books, and reports relevant to understanding the participation of pastoralists in land governance. The data obtained were categorised, analysed, interpreted, and organised qualitatively through content analysis; and narrated as a story capturing the actual details of the obtained data. The data garnered from different sources were triangulated against each other; and in relation to the theoretical perspective that grounded the study to enhance the trustworthiness of the results and their validity.

Permission to conduct this study was requested and obtained from all appropriate authorities in Kondoa and Chemba Districts. Details of the study were clearly explained to the participants, and their consent was obtained. Because some participants could not write, the researcher obtained either oral or written consent from the study participants. Indeed, voluntary participation was stressed, and the participants were assured that their information would be confidential, and would only be used for this study. Anonymity was upheld through the use of participants' unique identifiers in recording interviews.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Participation of Pastoralists in Land Use Planning and Management

As indicated above, the designing, implementation, and revision of village land-use plans as well as their management in village areas are required to be conducted in a participatory manner. As such, villagers have to take part in setting the agenda of land planning and participate in making the plan and overseeing its implementation in collaboration with respective government organs. Findings indicate that pastoralists are called to village meetings related to land conflicts and land planning. This view is well described by a pastoral man in Oblototi who confessed that *“All members are invited to village assembly meetings and in special meetings when land conflicts erupt”*. Such a response which was widely shared by pastoralists suggests that land users in the study area who were directly affected by land problems, and who are likely to benefit from improved resource management were invited to deliberate on land issues. However, few were in a position to say they participated in their village land use plan as most of the interviewees were not aware of the existence or non-existence of formal land use plans as the following quote exhibits:

“We are invited to meetings and attend because we are part of the village and land is important to us but we don’t contribute much. We listen to leaders and sometimes we don’t even understand what is narrated. I don’t know, and I am sure most of my fellow pastoralists don’t know about the village land use plan. We know decisions related to land conflicts”².

The views expressed above were echoed by most pastoralists despite the existence of the plan as evidenced by the key informants. Most respondents were aware of customary land use plans demarcating pastoral as well as agricultural land. Also, they were aware of land planned for public use particularly social amenities like schools and dispensaries. Importantly, most pastoralists claimed to be invited to attend meetings aimed at resolving land conflicts between pastoralists and farmers organised by local government officials instead of fully participating in agenda setting, land allocation, and controlling land planning processes. While on the one hand, the responses indicated that most pastoralists were not aware of their village land plans, on the other, they suggest that they were at least aware of initiatives and platforms to deliberate on land conflicts whenever they happen to take place. The limited knowledge of village land use plans among pastoralists suggests weaknesses on the part of local institutions to build pastoralists' knowledge of village land use planning and capacity to actively participate in land use decision-making. The exclusion of pastoralists' views in village land plan augurs well with Misafi (2014), who contended that pastoralists' participation in local governance is nominal despite constituting a significant part of inhabitants of Kondoa and Chemba districts and their means of livelihood. Such a position augurs

² Personal Interview with an elderly pastoralist at Rofati Village

well with a study by Malipula (2022) that demonstrated minimum participation of the vulnerable groups in Tanzania's context - women and youth (who constitute the majority in our population census) in planning and budgeting in LGAs.

4.2 Participation of Pastoralists in Land Governance-related Meetings

Attendance in land-related meetings in the villages is another important aspect of land governance particularly because most critical decisions related to lands are made in meetings. Attendance in meetings in the context of the current study entails an individual's physical presence at meetings and the contributions made by attendees through posing questions and/or arguing for or against the motions tabled in the meetings for deliberation. As such, this study wished to know if pastoralists attended land-related meetings and how they participated in those meetings. The results indicated that most pastoralists attended village assembly meetings and other special village meetings particularly when land conflicts occurred compared to village assembly meetings that had no agenda on land issues. One pastoralist in Magasa revealed:

“The Maasai people are obsessed with cattle and land for grazing them but do not ask leaders about issues discussed until final decisions on land questions are made. We are happy when we are allowed to graze. ...we do not pay attention to issues that do not address the two”³.

The view was further supported by a female respondent in Olboloti in an interview who confessed: *“Pastoralists involved in meetings hardly raise their hands to ask questions or make a contribution on issues discussed”*. Despite the participation claimed to exist when it comes to land-related meetings, the fact that the pastoralists' contributions in meetings are limited and the degree of knowledge of land plans and their associated effects suggests numerical participation of pastoralists in land governance in the studied villages. These findings suggest that Maasai participation in land governance-related meetings is best informed by the critical mass understanding of participation which accentuates enhancing the number of people involved in governance matters regardless of the role played by those actors in realising their interests and concerns. In the light of Agarwal's six levels of participation, mere physical attendance of participants in meetings without active participation in deliberations is regarded as the lowest form of participation. This challenged the substantive part of participation which entails that participation in a meeting means asking questions, involving in discussion, and reaching into conclusion (Massoi, 2015). More importantly, the participation of pastoralists in formal decision-making organs like the Ward Development Committee and the Full Council is limited as membership to those meetings is by political offices

³ Personal Interview with a Pastoralist in Gwandi Village

attained through electoral contests which most pastoralists do not take part in as substantiated below.

4.3 Vying for Leadership Positions in Land Committees

Contesting leadership positions in land committees was considered necessary in gauging participation of pastoralists in land governance. In this section, we unveil pastoralists' awareness of their right to be elected into leadership positions in land-related decision-making organs and the extent to which pastoralists vied for such leadership positions within their localities. Results reveal that most pastoralists happened to be aware of their right to stand for leadership positions during elections. However, most pastoralists were of the view that their limited formal education and nomadic traditional practices granted them minute chances of winning public support among non-pastoralists. In the four villages studied, the level of pastoralists' participation in the land and environmental committees was below ten percent, and no pastoralists chaired or held the secretary role in the committees despite their interest in land and the fact that the impact of their activities, by and large, causes land problems between them and agriculturalists. The limited participation of pastoralists in contesting leadership positions was worse among pastoral women, who were of the view that leadership positions are reserved for men. This was evidenced by the fact that there were no pastoral woman candidates for land and environmental committee Chairperson positions in the four villages studied. Instead, pastoral women just observed pastoral and non-pastoral men as well as non-pastoral women contesting village leadership positions within land committees and beyond. However, interviews revealed that limited pastoral women contested village leadership positions and faced stern challenges from men as the following contention attests:

“My aspiration to become a village chairperson was cut short by the village political committee that dropped my name on grounds that put a clog to male chauvinism and would neglect domestic responsibilities”⁴.

During FGDs, some pastoral participants registered their wish to contest political leadership positions. However, they claimed that there was a myriad of factors that barred them from doing so as the following quote suggests:

“Numerous Maasai pastoralists wish to vie for leadership positions but they do not do so because they are not fluent in Swahili and lack sound education. Who wishes to be led by an ignorant pastoralist? I like to contest, but voters will just laugh at me because I lack education”⁵.

⁴ Personal interview with a pastoral woman in Rofati Village

⁵ Personal interview with a pastoral woman in Gwandi village

Another Maasai pastoralist asked a question: “*Do you mean that even we Maasai can vie for political posts?*” This question is astonishing as Tanzania's constitution overtly provides for all Tanzanians regardless of their ethnic origin to contest any political office given that the aspirant does meet the requisites attached to the post in question. The question also supports the view of Malipula (2021), who argued that equal rights to citizens do not provide equality as those who are not aware of the right and/or unable to exercise the rights will not be able to reap the fruits of the rights provided in legal books.

Generally, results in this section suggest nominal participation of pastoralists in leadership in general, and land committees, in particular. This observation is in line with the views of Flintan et al. (2019; 2011) as well as Balehay et al. (2018) that socio-cultural factors are a challenge to pastoralists’ participation in leadership positions. As such, most pastoralists implement the decisions made by their fellow members. The data and discussion above suggest that the level of pastoralists’ participation in land governance is nominal. Such a state of affairs begs the question: Why is it the case? The subsequent section attempts to provide answers to the question by looking into the dynamics of pastoralists’ participation in land governance.

4.4 Dynamics of Pastoralists’ Participation in Land Governance: Social Norms, Values, Power Relations and Participation in Land Governance

Theoretically, norms and values are understood to explain an individual’s participation in decision-making. This is because norms and values may overtly influence individuals’ participation in public activities. Therefore, we assume that social norms and values determine pastoralists’ participation in land governance. In this article, we examine how the Maasai pastoralists’ gender and age-set system-related norms inform pastoralists’ participation in land governance. Our results reveal that gender and age-set social norms determine pastoralists’ participation in land governance as pastoral traditions regard women as second-class citizens who should not take an active part in decision-making forums, thus limiting the inclusion of almost half of pastoralists. For example, it was observed that pastoralists among the Maasai are made to put on unique clothes smeared with oil to distinguish them from other people and limit their freedom of interaction with non-pastoralists in public places as the oil-smeared clothes stink.

It is worth noting that the practice is not common in other pastoral societies or semi-pastoral societies in the country like the Gogo found within Dodoma Region, and the Sukuma found in Mwanza Region. Some men put on similar clothes but have the liberty not to as the norms do not force them to. The dressing code stands in the way of such pastoralists’ active participation in

communal meetings discussing land matters. This is because they feel inferior to non-pastoralists who do not put on such code and, therefore, they do not take part in meetings that they are constitutionally allowed to attend like the Village Assembly which, among other things, discusses issues related to land. Such feelings of self-denial are well expressed by one Maasai pastoral woman's disinterest in contesting political posts for fear of being unelectable due to her traditional dress code:

“How can I go to meetings and stand for election while I cannot put on modern cosmetics and clothes? I will be a disgrace in meetings that include modern women and men”⁶.

“Generally, vying for a leadership position is not a Maasai norm. We have to go to meetings and listen to what is said about ourselves and our cows”⁷.

Apart from the self-denial expressed above, it is imperative to note that there are norms that directly assign pastoral women in Maasai societies' household roles that bar them from playing an active role in public life; and when they do, they are only active in matters that are dictated by men (Rweyemamu, 2019). Likewise, the practice of payment of bride price as a condition for marriage makes suitors assume total ownership of the bride, and eventually, the married woman becomes part of the groom's property (Misafi, 2014). In this context, married women's decisions including movements outside their households and contributions during meetings require approval from their husbands.

The views above indicate that power relations in decision-making circles among pastoral men and women are unequal as pastoral women are regarded as men's property; hence having little influence in decision-making meetings that are free to all citizens unless permitted to participate by men. This is supported by the views of one pastoral woman who confessed:

“We are not allowed to mingle with people in public matters and, at home, husbands or males lead us. Even our male kids are made to lead us by our culture although they are younger and sometimes unwise than us”⁸.

Such practice is based on traditional values that regard women as an inferior sex which should be confined to household chores (Massoi, 2019). Importantly, it was revealed through an all-male FGD that pastoral men in Maasai societies are of the view that if pastoral women are given the right to actively participate in land governance and do so, they will certainly reverse men's dominant land ownership and use and other related male chauvinistic pastoral community dictates. It is imperative

⁶ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Gwandi village

⁷ Personal interview with a pastoralist in Olboloti village

⁸ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Olboloti village

to note that traditionally, it is considered by Maasai pastorals to be dangerous and taboo for women to lead men. As such, women are not allowed to participate actively in determining who gets what, when, and how within the pastoralists' socio-economic sphere; and by extension in the public sphere. As such, the social norms limit pastoral women from actively participating in their own traditional leadership as well as any formal or informal links that could exist between the traditional Maasai leadership and LGAs in issues related to land governance. Such discrimination against women in leadership contradicts good governance ethos emphasising equality between men and women in decision-making processes.

The discrimination against women is also applicable to elders as power relations in pastoral Maasai settings are unequal as elderly men are charged with the responsibility of making societal decisions. These elders according to views solicited from FGDs are very powerful and command respect in pastoral societies as they are regarded as the wisest people. The perceived wisdom of these elders is expected to be critical for making rational decisions for the good of the entire community. It was observed that even local government leaders particularly at the Ward level recognise leaders of pastoralist communities. They use them regularly when they want to mobilise pastoralists to participate in public matters such as attending public meetings and voting. With such respect placed on elderly men, enhancement of pastoral participation could benefit from the support of these traditional leaders. However, these elders' wisdom maintains the male chauvinistic norms that undermine the role of pastoral women and younger pastoral men in public governance affairs for fears of non-traditional views on land management issues. The words of one pastoral man well summaries this position:

“The elders of our community are like semi-gods! They can do anything to change the nominal role of women and younger pastoral men in governance but maintain their domination over women and younger pastoral men. They think we will have ideas that challenge theirs due to our youth and the development we see on televisions”⁹.

The views expressed above suggest that participation of pastoralists in land governance initiatives is generally low. However, the situation is worse among women and youth. Misafi & Malipula (2016) contend that women and youth in pastoral experience double marginalisation in pastoral societies—being pastoralists and being pastoral women and pastoral youth. As such, decision-making circles reproduce conservative views of Maasai elders as they participate in the formal LGA meetings; and are informally consulted when, and if, necessary. This view is well supported by young Maasai interviewees, who claim that the process of moving from youth to adulthood ensures that the youth

⁹ Personal interview with a pastoral man held in Gwandi village

joining the elderly group are well indoctrinated to maintain conservative thoughts promoting wandering around for pastures and limiting female ownership of land. Such indoctrination and status quo maintenance augur well with the scepticism of Malipula (2022) that D by D hardly benefits the most marginalised groups in pastoral societies. It is also in line with Balehay et al. (2018), who view socio-cultural factors informing women's interactions in public spaces as a key factor explaining their limited role in governance matters.

4.5 Livelihood Practices and Participation in Land Governance

As seen above, livelihood practices are viewed as important in determining the role people play in decision-making endeavours as they can force them to make choices between livelihood activities and land governance decision-making activities. Nomadic life practises that subject pastoralists to mobility for acquiring animal feeds also affect pastoralists' participation in decision-making on land issues. This is mainly because these movements make information about meetings hard to get; and even those who get information have to travel to attend meetings in their original villages. In instances where pastoral women are left behind, it could not have been a big problem as they would have stood in for their husbands. However, it was observed that when they are left behind, they are restricted from getting outside their households without permission. Such restrictions belittle the pastoralists' voice in decision-making as the permission givers (husbands) are hard to find. Matters are worse when this view is coupled with the fact that pastoral cultures and norms generally dissuade pastoral women from participating in public affairs as well established above.

Importantly, the movement added upon women's responsibilities of building houses and setting means of livelihood that limited their time to participate in land governance activities. Inferably, the failure to participate in land governance-related issues reflects a rational cost-benefit choice between the products of pastoral activities and involvement in decision-making. To most interviewees, their involvement in their livelihood activities was far more important than participating in local governance issues within their society. This is partly because their ways of life, which are traditional and mobile, require more attention from varied areas than settled societies which feel they belong to a particular area (Archambault et al., 2020). It is worth noting that the Maasai in the area of study were not in their land of origin nor were they destined to permanently stay in Kondoia and/ or Chemba. More significantly, most pastoralists could not see the incentives of effective participation in land governance issues as their daily livelihood and ways of life are nomadic, and the importance of governance interventions is deemed relevant only when they have land conflicts with farmers.

This position augurs well with Misafi (2014), who argues that pastoralists are more interested in having a conducive environment for their livelihood; and thus wish the state to guarantee it but are not ready to influence policies or make decisions that further the state they require for their pastoral activities. Equally important, as Archambault et al. (2020) purport, such views suggest that most pastoralists do not consider their involvement in local governance decision-making organs to be significant in addressing the problems associated with their economic activities. As such, the nomadic pastoral economic activities and the detachment they feel towards the potential of local government organs to improve their livelihood impede Maasai pastoralists from effectively reaping the participatory intentions and presumed benefits of participatory local governance. This is in line with Rweyemamu (2019), who contends that pastoralists are accorded less space to actively participate in land governance within the local governance system in Tanzania.

4.6 Access to Information and Pastoralists' Participation

Access to information is equally central in enhancing and/or limiting participation since any kind of participation requires information (Flintan et al., 2011). In this regard, pastoralists' participation in land governance can be determined by their access to governance-related information about their locality and beyond. This is because information could play an important role in making pastoralists take part in land governance-related matters in an informed manner as well as making them plan for their personal affairs and setting time to have a stake in public activities (Rweyemamu, 2019). Our results generally confirm that pastoralists access limited land governance information through their leaders, both government and traditional. In particular, most pastoral women mainly receive such information from their spouses because as stated earlier, they are not free to engage in public affairs. However, information from spouses was not very useful because it was often not timely and effectively delivered due to their mobile activities. Also, it was revealed that spouses or males being the source of information presented a problem as they censored the information to suit their dominant social order. A pastoral woman confessed:

“Pastoral men just give us information that improves their male ego and enhances female domination. They would not tell us things that will make us engage in public affairs”¹⁰.

The male dominance aspect expressed above augurs well with the views of Massoi (2015), who contends that Maasai norms and values hardly empower women's participation in governance matters. Access to alternative sources of information like electronic media could be useful but most Interviewees lack Televisions and some cannot benefit from print media as they do not read. Radio

¹⁰ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Gwandi village

programmes that could have provided an alternative did not as most interviewees confessed that they mainly tune on radio stations that entertain. To a lesser degree, some interviewees claimed that the use of Swahili to communicate official information and run meetings impeded pastoralists' participation.

The language problem as said has been highlighted by a few interviewees. However, its relevance could be questioned because the problem was not encountered when we conducted 69 interviews in Swahili and only 3 with the aid of an interpreter. However, after the interviews, the interpreter confessed that the interviewees could speak Swahili but chose not to. They confided that the said interviewees could perfectly communicate in Swahili with non-pastoral people when they sell milk and other pastoral products. Therefore, the severity of Swahili as a barrier to participation in land governance cannot be considered to be significant.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The present study chiefly indicates that the participation of pastoralists in land governance is nominal, and the dynamics of their participation are linked to both their presence (numerical/descriptive elements) and deeds (substantive elements). Numerically, the Maasai are limited due to their nomadic socio-economic lifestyles which make them wander for pastures, and those taking part in land governance-related decision-making are affected by Maasai socio-cultural orientations and limited capacity to take the advantage of the participatory space available for citizens to take part in participatory land governance. Therefore, explaining pastoralists' participation in land governance in an "either/or" type of study intended to eliminate either of the two will spur the advantage of the richness of the two variables and their relationship in explaining pastoralists' participation in land governance. Importantly, the particularistic nature of the Maasai pastoralists' means of livelihood and their Age-set system that governs their socio-economic and political dos and don'ts cannot be well understood without an in-depth investigation into the dynamics of the two in informing Maasai pastoralists' participation in land governance. It is in the light of this backdrop that this article recommends an eclectic approach that blends descriptive and substantive elements to understand the forces that determine substantive and descriptive participation to comprehend pastoralists' participation in land governance. This way, it is imperative to adopt relevant interventions to enhance pastoralists' participation in land governance, revolving around provision of formal education to pastoralists, and deconstructing social norms, values, and power relations that undermine pastoralists' inputs in land governance to uphold the motivators of pastoralists' participation and to suppress demotivators of the same.

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