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Determinants of Peaceful Cross-Border Co-Existence between the Maasai and the Gusii in Kenya: A Historical Perspective, 1890-2002

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Abstract:

The re-introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya in the early 1990s contributed to inter-ethnic violence and clashes. These clashes have preoccupied Kenyan scholars for a long time and, as a result, have created the wrong perception that politics is the main historical determinant of ethnic cross-border relations between Kenyan ethnic communities. Ethnic clashes and conflicts have predated politically instigated ethnic clashes in Kenya. By relying on archival, oral, and secondary data, this study examined other historical determinants of cross-border ethnic relations between the Maasai and the Gusii.

Keywords: *Determinants, ethnic, cross-border, relations, maasai, gusii*

1. Introduction

Conflicts are inevitable when members of different ethnic groupings coexist in the same space. When these conflicts are handled appropriately, we can say that the communities peacefully coexist with one another. On the other hand, when these differences of opinion become out of control and lead to confrontations, we say that the communities are in a conflictual relationship with one another (Chavulimo, 2019). Therefore, peaceful co-existence between two different ethnic communities does not require that there be no arguments or debates between the two groups. When there are two ethnic communities living side by side, peaceful co-existence and conflictual co-existence are distinguishable from one another based on the level of disagreement between them as well as the presence or absence of efforts to contain such dispute.

Certain elements, which are considered to be determinants in this study, might cause either peace or war to exist between two different ethnic communities. There is a wide range of factors that can either lead to peaceful or conflictual co-existence. Disagreements can arise around the land, natural resources such as water and pasture, political leadership, the outcome of an election process, and marginalization on both the political and economic fronts, to name just a few of the topics involved (Yanamo & Deininger, 2005). According to Kapferer and Bjorn (2009), conflicts can arise over border issues when two communities are brought under the jurisdiction of one territory against the wishes of one or all ethnic communities. This can happen when two communities are placed under the control of one territory.

The results of this research have classified the factors that influence peaceful co-existence between different ethnic communities into five distinct categories: political, economic, socio-cultural, demographic, and environmental factors. However, studies of ethnic relations in Kenya tend to focus excessively on the political factors at play. This considers that Kenya was known as an 'island of peace' before 1992, when multi-party politics and democracy were reinstated in the country. According to Osaghae (1994), Kenya had its fair share of unsettling times that began as soon as the country achieved its independence under Kenyatta rule (1963-1978).

Although it is true that ethnic disputes in Kenya are most evident during political activities such as general elections, referenda, and by-elections (Menyi, 2009), it is also true that these ethnic conflicts pre-date current politics. The marginalization of certain ethnic groups over a prolonged period of time contributed to the escalation of several ethnic conflicts in the 1990s (Throup & Hornsby, 1998). According to Picciotto (2010), almost a fifth of the people who reside on the African continent do so in regions that are gravely impacted by inter-ethnic conflicts that have persisted for a considerable amount of time.

Scholars have erroneously portrayed the impression that Kenya's various ethnic communities were peacefully coexisting prior to the re-introduction of multi-party politics in the early 1990s by pushing this line of thinking. This perspective is incorrect. This study acknowledges the existence of political determinants of peaceful and conflictual relations between ethnic communities by focusing on the relationships between the Maasai and the Gusii. However, it also looks beyond politics to investigate other factors that can influence whether or not ethnic relationships are peaceful or

contentious. This considers that the factors that determine whether peaceful or conflictual interactions exist between different ethnic groupings are not fixed in time or place. They show up, vanish for a while, and then make a comeback. It is possible to deduce from this that to comprehend the connection between two communities; one must first examine the groups in their respective historical settings. Unfortunately, individuals who research ethnic relations do not do so in the context of history.

2. Methodology

In order to answer the question of what factors contribute to peaceful cohabitation between the Maasai and the Gusii interactions over a significant amount of time, this study utilized a historical research approach. The purpose of the project was to investigate the relationships that existed between the Maasai and the Gusii during pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial times by gathering historical data through oral interviews, literature reviews, and research in archival collections. The researchers of this study categorized the factors that influence harmonious ethnic relations across borders between the Maasai and the Gusii into five distinct groups after conducting data analysis. The following section will provide some quick remarks regarding the two communities whose cross-border relations will be the focus of the following section, which will then present a review of the factors that determine these cross-border relationships.

3. The Maasai

The Maasai are Nilo-Hamitic people who live in certain regions of Kenya and Tanzania and engage in a kind of pastoralism known as nomadic pastoralism (Hughes, 2002). They are included in the more comprehensive category of those who speak Maa. The Samburu, the Njemps, and several tribes of the Dorobo who live in close proximity to the Maasai are some of the other Maa-speaking people in Kenya (Kipury, 1983).

Before settling in various parts of Kenya, it is believed that the Maasai migrated from the north, in what is now Sudan at the Bahr-El-Ghazel Valley, before settling in Kenya's Great Rift Valley in the 17th or 18th centuries. This migration took place before the Maasai established themselves in various parts of Kenya (Sokoine, 1981; Kipury, 1983; Morner, 2006). They were nomadic pastoralists, and a dry season prompted them to relocate southward in search of pasture and water since it forced them to leave their traditional grazing grounds (Bentsen, 1989).

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, people who speak Maa today have inhabited the region that stretches from near Mt. Marsabit in northern Kenya all the way down to Kiteto in central Tanzania. This spans approximately 700 miles from north to south and approximately 200 miles from east to west. They lived on either side of the Rift Valley region in Kenya, and their territory extended all the way from Lake Baringo in the north to the middle of Tanzania in the south during the height of their dominance (Homewood & Rodgers, 1991). The Gusii are a community that coexists alongside the Maasai and is known for their close relationship with them.

4. The Gusii

Gusii or Abagusii are Bantu-speaking people who are descended from Mogusii. In contrast, the Maasai are members of the Nilo-Hamitic ethnic group (Wipper, 1977; Were & Nyamweya, 1986). They call the temperate and fertile south-western region of the Kenya Highlands and Gusii highlands their home (Omwoyo, 1992, Wipper 1977, Kenya National Archives, PC/RVP/11/1/4). According to Silberschmidt (1999), the British conquerors altered the name of Gusiiland to Kisii in 1907. As a result, the names Gusii and Kisii are sometimes used interchangeably with one another.

The Gusii people belong to the big family of the Bantu-speaking majority of sub-equatorial Africa since their language, known as ekegusii, is closely linked to the languages spoken by the West Kenya Bantu-Speakers (Ogonda & Ochieng', 1992; Levine 1979, and Mayer 1950). They have ties to other Bantu speakers who exchange tales about their ancestry, migration, and settlement in Kenya (Ochieng', 1974).

The Gusii engaged in activities including hunting, gathering, crop farming (primarily the cultivation of millet and rice), and the grazing of huge herds of cattle, goats, and sheep before establishing their present location in the Kisii Highlands (Kenya National Archives, DC/KSI/3/2). As was mentioned previously, the Gusii and the Maasai live on opposite sides of the same border.

5. Historical Determinants of Peaceful Cross-Border Relations between the Maasai and the Gusii

This study found that there are five types of historical causes of peaceful cross-border ethnic co-existence between the Maasai and the Gusii, with the possibility that there are even more. These categories are socio-cultural, economic, political, demographic, and environmental factors. The following discussion will focus on these kinds of historical factors of peaceful interethnic co-existence across international borders.

5.1. Socio-Cultural Determinants of Cross-Border Ethnic Relations between the Gusii and the Maasai

The socio-cultural determinants of peaceful co-existence between two or more ethnic communities are the variables that are connected to the social and cultural life of communities and are responsible for deciding whether or not co-existence will occur. They are inextricably linked to the actions taken by the members of a certain ethnic community, either against other members of their own community or toward members of a different ethnic community. During the pre-colonial period, the socio-cultural drivers of peaceful interethnic cross-border co-existence between the Maasai and the Gusii played a more significant role than they did during the colonial and post-colonial periods. During the time before European colonization, the culture of warriorship was fostered in each of these societies. The Maasai encouraged their warriors, known as morans, to steal animals, particularly after the rite that was performed to circumcise boys (eunoto).

This was one of the ways that a man's manhood could be proven. In addition to cash, newly initiated Morans were required to pay a dowry in the form of cattle. On the other hand, the Gusii had cultural characteristics that encouraged a warrior mentality. Young males were instructed in the culture of stealing cattle and hiding the stolen livestock in villages known as ebisarate, which were specifically designated for the housing of cattle (Were & Nyamweya, 1986). These cattle communities were defended by a large number of young men who did so in a harsh manner.

It was not until colonial times that some of the cultural characteristics of the Gusii and the Maasai that favored conflictual relations were eliminated. These characteristics included the following:

According to the Kenya National Archives (DC/KSI/1/2), the colonial authority put an end to the use of ebisarate. The colonial government, to put an end to this practice, made the decision to criminalize this culturally acceptable practice. In 1913, measures were taken 'to stop the practice of Kisii building cattle villages on the outskirts of their locations far away from tribal control.' This was done to bring this practice to an end. There is no doubt that animals that had been stolen were hidden in such places (KNA, DC/KSI/1/2, South Kavirondo District Annual Reports; 1913-1923).

On the other hand, to stop Maasai morans from carrying out cattle raids, the colonial authority kept a close eye on them and closely monitored their movements. Maasai attacks against their neighboring ethnic communities were brought under control due to the post-independence administrations' increased vigilance in monitoring the activities of newly started Maasai morans (Government of Kenya, Narok District Annual Report 1965).

These cultural characteristics that encouraged young males to take up a warrior's role began to fade away in Kenya once the country was colonized (Were & Nyamweya, 1986). Compared to the Maasai, the Gusii have experienced a considerably more rapid loss of certain aspects of their traditional heritage. This is because the influence of Christianity was experienced among the Gusii a great deal sooner than it was among the Maasai. In addition, because the Gusii were a settled tribe, a greater percentage of their children attended Christian or mission schools than Maasai children (Were & Nyamweya, 1986). The migration of a significant number of Gusii males in search of gainful employment was a significant factor in the progressive extinction of Gusii's cultural characteristics. According to the Kenya National Archives, DC/KSI/1/2, more Gusii men than Maasai were enlisted in the armed forces throughout both World Wars.

5.2. Economic Determinants of Peaceful Cross-Border Ethnic Relations between the Gusii and the Maasai

The term 'economic determinants of peaceful co-existence between ethnic communities' refers to the elements that emerge from the economic activity of members of a community and which either support or imperil peaceful co-existence between two or more ethnic communities. It would indicate that economic factors had an effect on the peaceful cohabitation that existed across the border between the Maasai and the Gusii during the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. According to the Kenya National Archives' DC/KSI/3/2 collection, the Maasai and the Gusii both maintained huge herds of livestock throughout the pre-colonial period. The high value that both communities put on livestock made it more likely for thefts of animals to occur between the two settlements. Because cattle were so important to the communities, their relationship was often fraught with tension because of this difference in priorities. However, the Maasai were more skilled warriors than the Gusii.

Both the Maasai and the Kipsigis attacked the Gusii because of their practice of cattle rearing. The Masai, in particular, assaulted the Gusii to steal their animals, which ultimately resulted in the deaths of a great number of people. The Gusii people used to raise cattle, but Maasai livestock attacks forced them to switch to mixed farming instead. Even though the Gusii engaged in mixed farming, they maintained far smaller herds of animals than was typical during the time of pre-colonization. When the Gusii lived in the Kano Plains (Ochieng', 1974), long before they moved to their current location in the Kisii Highlands, they were victims of cattle attacks carried out by the Luo. At this point in time, the Gusii were practicing livestock keeping. The highlands offered an environment that was suitable for crop production and regions in which they could hide from Maasai raids. They maintained small herds of cattle to provide themselves with milk, meat, and a form of cash that they used to conduct business, such as paying dowry and participating in barter trading.

The Gusii people were able to avoid or reduce the risk of violent confrontation with Maasai cattle raiders because they maintained small herds of animals. On the other hand, the Maasai persisted in their practice of nomadic pastoralism, and incidents of cow thievery shifted away from the Gusii and toward other populations that continued to place an economic value on livestock. It should come as no surprise that there were more instances of livestock thefts among the Maasai and the Kipsigis and Kuria than between the Maasai and the Gusii. On the one hand, this was because the Maasai and the Kipsigis and Kuria lived in close proximity to one another (Government of Kenya, Narok District Annual Reports for 1965, 1966, and 1970).

The Gusii and the Maasai created a trade relationship despite relying on distinct methods of subsistence (mixed farming and nomadic pastoralism, respectively). This trade relationship was, for the most part, utilized to foster peaceful cohabitation between the two populations. The Gusii were responsible for the cultivation of many of the grains that the Maasai consumed. In the Masai society, the elders, the women, and the young people are the ones who consume significant quantities of agricultural products, such as cereals, beans, bananas, and other foods (Kivasis, 1953). The Gusii not only sold their grains to the Maasai but also utilized commerce as a bargaining chip to convince them to stop their attacks on their people (the Gusii). When the Maasai attacked the Gusii in 1943 and confiscated animals from them, for instance, the Gusii refused to sell food to the Maasai (Kenya National Archives, DP/18/14). The Masai were forced to beg for forgiveness before commerce could be reestablished between the two communities. Following the loss of Maasai livestock in 1943, the Chief of Nyaribari made the following remark concerning the interruption of commercial links between the Gusii and the Maasai:

In addition, I ask that you write a letter to the District Commissioner of Narok to inform the Morani of Maasai that until they come to terms with the thefts, the Wakisii will stop selling the crop to them as they did in 1943. They should recall how they petitioned their DC to ask D.C. Kisii to enable the crop to be sold to them and to reopen a market at Ramasha. They should also remember how D.C. Kisii agreed to both requests. The Maasai people may perish from starvation if they did not receive their food from Kisii... And naturally, they are conscious of the fact that the Wakisii serves as their primary source of food storage. They are unable to cultivate the land and instead subsist solely on meat and milk; hence, in the event that there is a sun drought in their country, they dash off to the Kisii in search of sustenance (Kenya National Archives, DP/1/13).

The provision of agricultural support by the colonial administration to the Gusii, which served to encourage crop production among the Gusii, was an effect of colonial rule. In turn, this served to reinforce the transition away from pastoralism and toward crop farming among the Gusii. The economic activity that resulted in the highest amount of profit throughout the time period of the colonial era was crop farming rather than the economy of animals. This was because growing crops required less labor. In addition, the Maasai people's Gusii counterparts were motivated to settle down and pursue settled lives by the agricultural practices of the Maasai, in contrast to the Maasai's predilection for nomadic lifestyles. The colonial government was able to recruit Gusii men for paid labor since the Gusii were already a settled group (Kenya National Archives, DC/KSI/1/2). This was made possible because the Gusii were already a settled population. The colonial leaders and private recruiters were responsible for this endeavor.

As a direct result of this, the colonial authority had an intense hatred for the Maasai and a predilection for the Gusii. This preference for the Gusii on the part of the colonial government was made clear by the manner in which the colonial authorities worked hard to safeguard them (the Gusii) against invasions by the Maasai. The Maasai were proven to have displayed preference in a similar vein in return. The colonial rulers were critical of the Maasai people because they kept 'large amounts of useless livestock that deprived wildlife of water and grazing' (Rutten, 2002:4).

5.3. Political Determinants of Cross-Border Ethnic Relations between the Gusii and the Maasai

The term 'political determinants of peaceful cross-border co-existence between two or more communities' refers to:

- The actions that politicians, leaders, government administrators, and policymakers or technocrats take, and
- The impact that these actions or their omissions have on the relationships that exist between different ethnic communities

It is possible to trace the political factors that contribute to harmonious cross-border ethnic relations between the Maasai and the Gusii back to the way in which the two communities were politically structured in the pre-colonial era.

The Maasai political hierarchy was structured in a way that encouraged livestock rustling because of how it was organized. The Gusii were subject to the same conditions. On the other hand, the Gusii lived in close proximity to politically powerful ethnic communities such as the Maasai, the Luo, and the Kipsigis (Ochieng, 1974). As a direct consequence of this, they came under attack from a large number of different ethnic communities surrounding them. Due to the Maasai's well-deserved reputation for brutality, early Swahili and Arab slave dealers avoided traveling across the region that they controlled (Onduru, 2009). There is a strong possibility that the Maasai communities did not suffer the loss of even a single member of their society to slave traders (Murunga, 1998).

The Luo, the Kipsigis, and the Maasai are the people from whom the Gusii had to flee to migrate and settle in their current locations (the Kisii highlands). This is the story of Gusii's movement and settlement. As a result of these attacks, they shifted from being primarily a community of cow keepers to being a mixed farming group (Ochieng, 1974). As a result, the Gusii were not skilled combatants like the Maasai, and because of this, they were subject to continuous cattle raids by the Maasai. This was significant from a political standpoint. Because of the Maasai people's superior fighting ability, the Gusii and the Maasai have never been able to live together peacefully. However, the formation of the colonial authority was a significant turning point in the game. For the same reason, some villages requested protection from the colonial authority because their neighboring communities were attacking them. This is why some communities wanted protection from the colonial government (Maxon, 1989).

The beginning of colonial control set in motion a series of political factors that eventually had an effect on the relationships between the Maasai and the Gusii. The traditional function of Gusii chiefs was ultimately taken over by colonial chiefs after the rank of the colonial chief was established. The demarcation of boundaries (Native Reserves) and the supervision of African affairs by the District Commissioners, as well as the creation of new institutions of promoting justice such as the Kenya Police, the courts, and prisons, all had an impact on the relationship between the Maasai and the Gusii.

Attacks on members of different ethnic groups or theft of animals were not tolerated by any of these colonial organizations. On the other hand, they worked to foster good contacts across the border, which, in turn, led to the development of cordial relations between the Maasai and the Gusii. Another frontier was established, and it was upon this frontier that amicable relations were fostered, thanks to the establishment of new laws that were superior to the Maasai and Gusii's traditional laws. One of the factors that contributed to the improvement of relations between the Maasai and the Gusii was the implementation of collective punishment as a form of retribution for robberies of cattle.

In the post-colonial era, it remained a regular practice for those suspected of animal cruelty to compensate the victims for the animals they had lost. For instance, after the conflict between the Gusii and the Maasai in 1965, which was precipitated by the Maasai's theft of cattle, a border committee was established, and the Maasai were ordered to pay 'Shs.

3,300/- to the Kisii in compensation for the cattle the latter had lost' (Government of Kenya, Narok District Annual Report, 1965:4).

As a result of this move, 'the area continued to be peaceful until the middle of the year' (Government of Kenya, Narok District Annual Report, 1965:2). Because of this, the administration of punishment in the form of the payment of compensation acted as an effective remedy in conflicts that were caused by the theft of stock.

A peaceful cohabitation between the Maasai and the Gusii was made possible due to the political acts and decisions made by individual colonial officials. At this point, it is necessary to emphasize the efforts that were made by a colonial leader by the name of Musa Nyandusi. Musa Nyandusi worked tirelessly to guarantee that the Gusii and the Maasai lived peacefully, side by side with one another. Since 1926, Head Musa Nyandusi has been serving as the colonial chief of the Nyaribari Location. He was also instrumental in the development of the relationship between the Gusii and the Maasai (Leonard, 1991). The territory that he oversaw as chief was located on the boundary between the Maasai and the Gusii. Given this circumstance, Nyachae had spent his childhood observing his father work to foster positive relationships between the Maasai and the Gusii.

It was anticipated of chiefs that they would be authoritative characters who would make hasty and definitive judgments and maintain order by commanding respect and even fear from their subordinates. These are some of the qualities that Musa Nyandusi possessed... The chief's primary responsibility was to mediate disagreements over land ownership... The Gusii, who practice agriculture, and the Maasai, who practice pastoralism, have traditionally had a contentious relationship because their respective territory limits overlap with one another. The British, who have always shown an interest in maintaining law and order, desired to find a solution to the situation and cut down on the amount of fighting. Nyandusi had a significant role in the demarcation of the line and convened public meetings to try to convince his people to accept the new boundaries and avoid conflict with the Maasai. Even yet, he would physically put himself in the middle of any fights that broke out to mediate and bring the parties involved to a peaceful resolution. This kind of bravery on the mat was typical of Nyandusi, a former wrestler who was renowned for his strength and agility (Leonard, 1991: 28).

On the other hand, there were times when political actions or omissions contributed to the tense relationships that existed between the Maasai and the Gusii. Even though President Kenyatta and President Moi's governments, after independence, were well-aware of the circumstances that contributed to conflictual relations between the Maasai and the Gusii, they did not make the required efforts to encourage peaceful cohabitation between the two groups. The issue of drought might be remedied by establishing water supply points in addition to establishing alternate grazing pastures. This would allow for the problem to be resolved. However, the government never allocated enough money to properly implement and accomplish the same goals. Additionally, the government did not offer adequate assistance for the health of animals. For example, in 1970, a significant amount of Maasai livestock perished due to drought and other animal diseases (Government of Kenya, Narok District Annual report 1970). As a result of the Maasai's loss of livestock, the Gusii and the Maasai resorted to stealing animals from one another, which, in turn, led to the development of antagonistic relations between the two groups. In 1965, the District Commissioner for the Narok District made the following observation:

The Maasai continued to provide strong support for the government. However, a significant amount of work was still required from the administration, other government departments, and politicians to translate this support into the practical implementation of the government policy. Specifically, the government policy was to introduce development schemes and generate progress in animal husbandry, agriculture, health, education, and other areas in the interest of both the Maasai and the country as a whole. This was in the interest of both the Ma (Government of Kenya, Narok District Annual Report 1965:2).

As part of the government's efforts to bring Kenyans together, it encouraged the establishment of a large number of Gusii cultivators in Trans Mara on land that the Maasai believed rightfully belonged to them. The government chose to ignore the influx of Gusii farmers into the Maasai territory by covering its eyes and ears. This was done despite the fact that the Kenyatta government was aware of the potential consequences in the future.

Infiltration by Kisii cultivators must be carefully watched as it might cause trouble in the future (KNA, DP/33/3).

Additionally, the government neglected to provide security officers (the police) to guard against cattle thefts on the Maasai-Gusii border, resulting in tense relations between the two populations. Unhappily, the Narok district did not have a suitable number of police officers, despite the fact that it reported some of the greatest and most significant incidents of tribal confrontations. The Narok District Commissioner made a comment on this current condition of events when he wrote the following in his report:

Despite the fact that the establishment remained at 97, the actual strength of the administrative police at the conclusion of the year was only 90. There is a compelling argument in favor of a somewhat larger institution in the major district, perhaps consisting of 150 soldiers, to make it possible to set up stations in the regions that are infamous for stock thefts and border conflicts (Narok District Annual Report, 1966:10).

5.4. Demographic Determinants of Cross-Border Ethnic Relations between the Gusii and the Maasai

In the later stages of the colonial period and the early stages of the post-colonial period, the problem of demographic determinants, which developed due to an increase in population and pressure on land and resources associated with land, emerged as a concern. This is because population pressure was crucial in determining whether the Maasai and the Gusii could live peacefully together. Both birth rates and death rates were significantly greater in pre-

colonial times, resulting in a lower overall population growth rate. As a result, the rate of population growth was significantly lower than it is today. This was because infections were common and child death rates were high. Both child mortality and morbidity were reduced as a direct result of the formation of colonial control, which occurred concurrently with advancements in the medical study of tropical diseases. This resulted in a steady rise in the number of people living on Earth over time. When Kenya gained its independence, both the Maasai and the Gusii were experiencing a rise in their respective populations' rates of natural increase.

The rise in population did not come about just as a consequence of advancements made in the field of medical science. Both of the communities' cultures, which included the practice of polygamy, contributed in their own ways to the expansion of the human population. Gusii males traditionally practiced polygamy, which was considered ideal for a man to have between three and four wives (Kenya National Archives, DP/18/13). Regarding the Maasai people, the institution of underage marriages contributed to the expansion of their population.

As no method of birth control was practiced among the Gusii or the Maasai, the populations of both groups grew at an alarming rate. As the population rose, there was a corresponding increase in the need for land that could be farmed. Because of this, an increasing number of Gusii people moved into regions inhabited by Maasai, particularly in the area known as the Trans Mara (Narok District Annual Report 1965). The rise in population inevitably led to conflicts on the ground. As a matter of custom, the Masai have always owned property collectively and used it for grazing reasons. On the other hand, among the Gusii, it was common for a married man to give a portion of land to each of his women for agricultural purposes (Silberschmidt, 1999; LeVine, 1966).

Both the Maasai and the Gusii started to become more land-conscious as the country got closer and closer to achieving its independence. Both the Gusii and the Maasai raised claims and counterclaims when a regional boundaries Commission was established to review boundaries to make it easier for politicians to be elected to the Senate. These claims and counterclaims pointed toward the cultivation of poor relations between the two groups.

While population expansion put pressure on land, and ethnic relations became tense, post-independence governments continued to encourage the settlement of non-Maasai populations on Maasai land. This was done despite the fact that Maasai land was already in short supply. On Maasai land, the colonial authority actively encouraged the establishment of members of the Kikuyu community, Gusii, Maragoli, and the Luo in the expectation that these groups would persuade the Maasai to give up their practice of nomadic pastoralism in favor of crop farming.

This did not work. Additionally, the colonial authority actively supported the colonization of populations that were not Maasai in the Trans Mara region. This is despite the fact that the government was aware that such a settlement would lead to problems in the future (Government of Kenya, Narok District Annual Report 1965; Kenya National Archives, DP/33/3). The expansion of the human population was not the only factor contributing to the situation. The number of cattle was also on the rise, and the strain that was being put on land was due to both the growth of the human population and the quantity of livestock.

5.5. Environmental Determinants of Cross-Border Ethnic Relations between the Gusii and the Maasai

The term 'environmental determinants of peaceful interethnic co-existence' refers to aspects of the environment, such as water, pasture, land, and meteorological conditions (rainfall). All these play a role in whether or not interactions between different ethnic communities are peaceful or contentious. The pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras have been influenced by the environmental factors that have been decisive in maintaining stable ethnic relations between the Maasai and the Gusii. However, since pre-colonial times, droughts have been increasingly severe. Along with this severity, environmental elements have become increasingly important in determining whether or not the Maasai and the Gusii can coexist peacefully. Additionally, climate change has exacerbated the severity of droughts and animal diseases, all of which have severely impacted the production of crops and cattle.

Even though droughts were common throughout the pre-colonial period in Maasai history, their effects on the Maasai way of life and economy were not quite as devastating as they are today. This is because the Maasai inhabited wide areas of land and were able to roam freely in search of grazing and water sources. They had a well-defined system of dry-season and wet-season grazing, which ensured that their animals would survive even the most severe droughts. The Maasai could not maintain their traditional grazing pattern due to the land being taken away for European colonization during the colonial period. The environmental factors were additionally compounded by the increase in the population of the Maasai, non-Maasai, and animals, which degraded the already unsuitable terrain upon which the Maasai reside. This resulted in the land being even less appropriate for human habitation.

During the Lancaster House Conference, which was part of Kenya's process of gaining its independence, the Maasai people presented specific claims concerning the land they had lost to European immigrants during the time that Kenya was under colonial occupation.

The crux of the situation is that the concept of land tenure in Kenya is inexorably tribal in the very first instance and only later becomes a concept of clan, family, and, lastly, individual ownership. As has been said on numerous occasions before, the land in question, which is located in the Rift valley, is unquestionably Maasai due to the historical right associated with it. Any strategies that are used in an attempt to avoid this reality would, at most, result in a short-term fix, which could, in the long run, cause a dramatic explosion. (Bureau of National Archives of Kenya, Document Number BN/81/114)

The livestock sector of the Maasai economy suffered due to the decision made by the colonial authority to relocate the Maasai from Laikipia to Narok, where they were eventually settled. According to Ndege (1992), the Maasai did not find Narok appealing because of the nature of the pasturage. As a direct consequence of this, the Maasai lost the majority of

their livestock. The result of this was an upsurge in raids on adjacent villages such as the Gusii, which was a direct reflection of the impact of the loss of cattle.

6. Conclusion

The research has shown that the cross-border relationships between the Maasai and the Gusii are determined by various factors (determinants), which can be categorized into five primary groups, including socio-cultural, political, economic, demographic, and environmental factors. These aspects, also known as determinants, can, at times, act independently of one another, while at other times, they must cooperate.

After establishing the colonial authority in Kenya, the colonial authorities felt it was vital to eradicate some cultural practices that fostered poor relations between neighboring populations, such as the Maasai and the Gusii. One such practice was the practice of circumcision. Ebisarate, also known as cattle settlements, were eliminated by the colonial authority as a means for the Gusii to conceal stolen livestock. It was forbidden to participate in activities like cattle raiding that were related to the Maasai circumcision ceremony, known as Eunoto. The motivation behind this action was to foster a peaceful co-existence across the boundary between the two villages.

In addition to putting an end to practices that fostered hostile relations, the colonial authority actively encouraged practices that fostered friendly interactions. In particular, the colonial authorities fostered the development of commercial connections between the Maasai and the Gusii. The Maasai and the Gusii used to conduct business with one another at several locations, including the Ramasha market. The strengthening of roads that led to and from Ramasha significantly fostered increased commercial interaction between the two settlements. In terms of behaviors that fostered positive relationships. The Maasai were notorious for their habit of committing cow thefts and committing raids on neighboring groups. The Maasai had a well-deserved reputation as ferocious and skilled warriors among their peers.

The fact that the Gusii were frequently the targets of livestock raids at the hands of the Maasai played a significant role in the group's conclusion that it was time to abandon the practice of maintaining huge herds of cattle in favor of engaging in mixed farming. The Maasai and the Gusii were able to reduce the number of cattle thefts that occurred between them because of this initiative of self-help. Since they were surrounded by other ethnic groups that placed a very high value on livestock, the Gusii would have been wiped out if they had persisted in maintaining animals because these other ethnic groups placed a very high value on livestock. After moving to their current location, the Gusii discovered that they were surrounded by the Maasai, Kuria, and Kipsigi people. The theft of livestock was a common activity in all of these societies.

The government set up new institutions and revamped existing ones, both of which led to the two communities being able to peacefully coexist with one another. The office of the colonial chief, which had previously been held by traditional chiefs, was renamed and given a new set of responsibilities. However, when colonial chiefs were in power, it was not acceptable for them to condone violence between different ethnic groups. Traditional leaders did so. Warriors were changed out for members of the police and army. Their job description was changed such that they are now responsible for maintaining peace and order across the board rather than simply inside their own villages, as had been the case previously. In addition, new rules were enacted to guide both the interactions between individuals and the relationships between communities. The Maasai and the Gusii could live more peacefully together with the implementation of collective punishment, for instance, which helped reduce the number of instances of cattle theft that had been a danger to their peaceful co-existence. When it came to dealing with lawbreakers, the colonial authority set up brand new organizations that were tasked with the responsibility of administering justice. Some of the criminals, like those who stole animals, posed a risk to the peaceful co-existence of the Gusii and the Maasai.

The presence or absence of peaceful ties between the Gusii and the Maasai was, to a large extent, also determined by environmental factors. This is taking into consideration the fact that most of the disputes between the Maasai and the Gusii were centered on stealing cattle. The vast majority of cattle were stolen either during a ritual that involved circumcision or during times of drought. As a result, drought and hunger contributed to the deterioration of ties, while wet seasons contributed to maintaining harmonious relations. Relationships between the Gusii and the Maasai have been put in jeopardy as a result of environmental causes in addition to demographic determinants. Since the days before European colonization, both the Maasai and the Gusii have seen their numbers of people steadily rise throughout the course of time. This has resulted in pressure being placed on land and resources that are tied to the land, such as water and pasture. As a result of competing for land claims and counterclaims, the number of land-related disputes has increased dramatically.

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