

Faculty of Arts, Department of History

MA Project

**Water Resource Conflict in Kenya: The Case of Turkwel Dam and Pokot-Turkana
Relations, 1984-2015**

By

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DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been submitted for an award of a degree either in any University or any other institution.

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This project has been submitted for an examination with our approval as University supervisors.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother Julia Mukoya Nandelenga, late father Timothy Nandelenga and late brother Joseph Nandelenga.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the many recent studies on resource conflict, its effect on community livelihoods, relations and security, these studies, mainly, focus on the link between conflict and the consequent inefficient natural resource utilization, dismal economic development as well as the decline of state hegemony in matters security. The current project was, fundamentally, consistent to this trend, given that its aim was to augment the extant understanding of resource-based conflicts, intercommunity relations and state patronage. The study examined the Pokot-Turkana inter-ethnic relations using the Turkwel Hydro-electric Dam (THD) as the central arena to illustrate the relationship binary of conflict and cooperation between the two neighbouring communities. Consequently, in this project, I argue that, before the dam, Pokot and Turkana only fought between the months of April and June. This is the period each community has enough pasture and healthy livestock. The study refers to it as the rain period. Secondly, as its immediate impacts, the construction of the Turkwel Hydroelectric dam dried up the river in the downstream; it displaced many people¹ although in the same period it created casual or short term manual jobs for the locals and thirdly, both locally and internationally, the dam became a new field in Kenya on which there featured hydro-politics, state patronage and conflict which was later influenced by the installation of the Safaricom communication booster for staff and locals but instead embraced by the *ngoroko* (warriors from both Turkana and Pokot) to acquire more *mulika mwizi* (simple mobile phone). The research concludes that the state hegemony was missing in the region. Despite the fact that the Pokot and Turkana areas such as Turkwel, Kakong, Ombolion, Kasei, Kainuk, Lami nyeusi and Lorogon were regarded as insecure, people relied on the *ngoroko* for protection and security. The irony is that *ngoroko* were blamed by state and some faction of local people for chaos and insecurity in the region. I further conclude that in academic sector, it is the Catholic Church which took over the provision of basic needs to the Pokot and Turkana people. In essence this took away the two communities sovereignty and instead created dependant mentality on the church to provide education and food while the *ngoroko* provided security. Therefore, due to the breadth of this debate in regard to the cooperation and conflict over resources, there is need for more studies to shed light on possible answers to the challenges the two communities face.

¹ Nyamai, F. (2013 Oct 31). Steeped in controversy, dam gobbled up 20 billion, five times more than the initial budget. *Daily Nation*. p.17.

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vi
MAP OF THE STUDY AREA.....	viii
OPERETIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS	ix
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	x

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Statement of the research problem	4
1.3 Research questions.	5
1.4 Objectives of the study	5
1.5 Justification of the study	5
1.6 Scope and Limitations.....	6
1.7 Literature Review.....	7
1.8Theoretical framework.....	14
1.9 Research Hypothesis	17
1.10 Methodology.....	17

CHAPTER TWO

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO POKOT-TURKANA RELATIONS

2.1 Introduction	20
2.2 Turkwel Region, Turkana and Pokot people and their way of life.....	20
2.3 The Pokot and Turkana people during the colonial and post-colonial rule	25
2.4 Famine and decreased mobility among the Turkana and Pokot People	30
2.5 Conclusion	34

CHAPTER THREE

**A CURSE AND BLESSING: TURKWEL DAM AND POKOT-TURKANA RELATIONS,
1984-1991**

3.1 Introduction..... 36
3.2 Construction of Turkwel dam and the dry river bed36
3.3 Jobs at Turkwel dam 39
3.4 Development-induced displacement43
3.5 Conclusion46

CHAPTER FOUR

**THE STATE AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT:CONTRADICTIONS OF THE TURWEL
DAM AND POKOT-TURKANA RELATIONS, 1991-2015.**

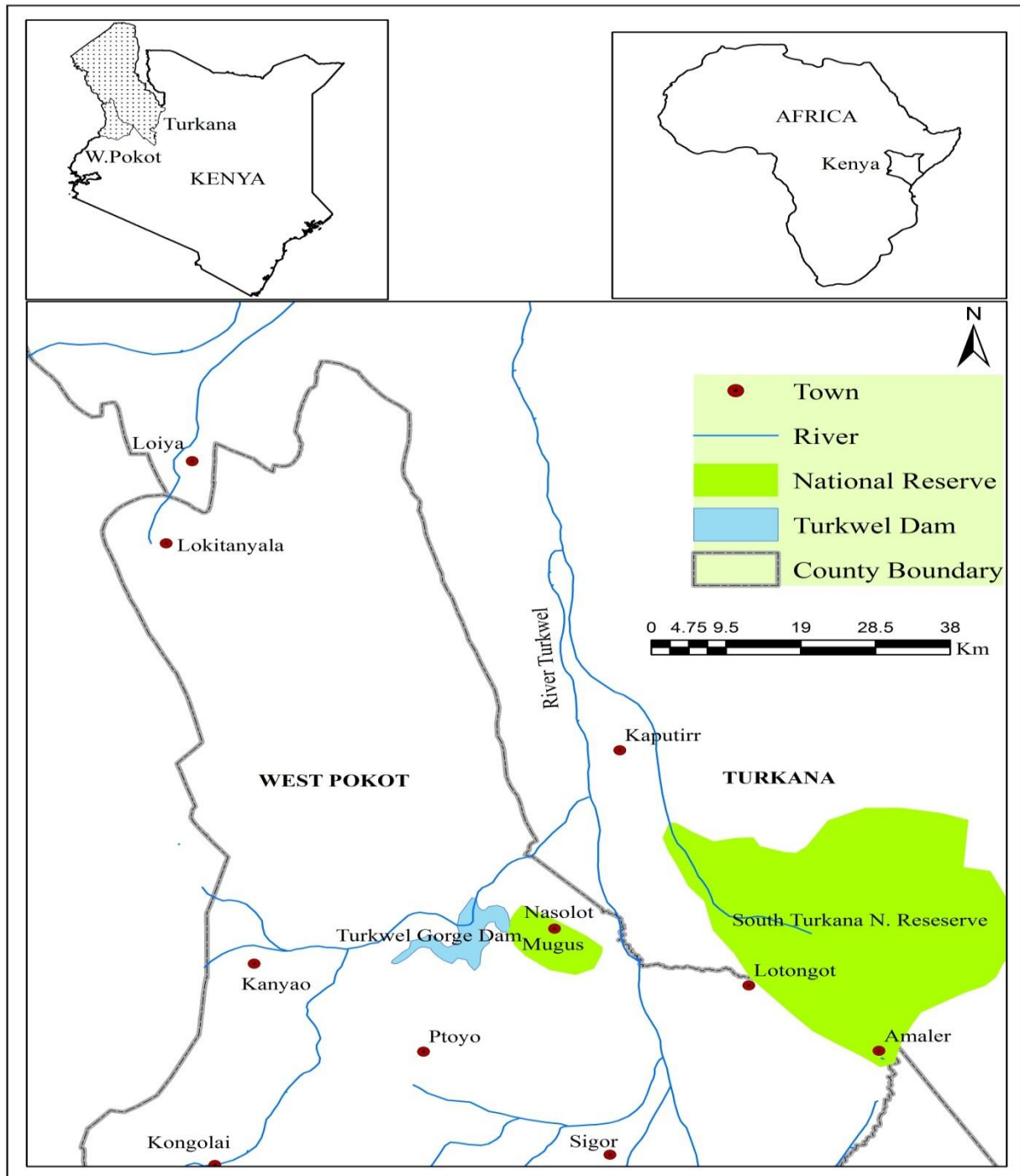
4.1 Introduction47
4.2 Turkwel dam Hydro-politics48
4.3 Turkwel dam state patronage and Pokot-Turkana Relations 52
4.4 Mobile telephony and Turkwel dam conflict..... 60
4.5 Conclusion 68

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion 70
BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 75

MAP OF THE STUDY AREA



Source: Department of Geography, University of Nairobi & Adopted by Nandelenga, History Department, 2018.

OPERETIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Hydro-politics: It is used in this study to refer to the activities associated with Turkwel dam before, during and after its construction.

Water Cooperation: It is used in this research to explain the conflict and cooperation between the Pokot and Turkana over Turkwel dam.

Mulika- mwizi- In this study it refers to a cheap, simple and easy technology mobile phone which has a durable battery.

Ngoroko- In Pokot language the word refers to a youth warrior. The study uses the same to a Turkana warrior due to the similar ecology the two communities are situated.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BIEA	British Institute in Eastern Africa
CEO	Chief Executive officer
CJPC	Catholic Justice and peace Commission
EAC	East African Community
ECC	European Economic Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FORD	Kenya- Forum for the Restoration of Democracy – Kenya
GERD	Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
GSU	General Service Unit police
IBWC	International Boundary and Water Commission
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KENGEN	Kenya Electricity Generating Board
KEWI	Kenya Water Institute
KNDA	Kenya National and Documentation Archive
KPR	Kenya Police Reservists
KVDA	Kerio Valley Development Authority
MCA	Member of the county Assembly
MD	Managing Director
MP	Member of Parliament
MW	Megawatt
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
NIB	National Irrigation Board
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development
NORCONSULT	Norway Consultancy

OCS	Officer Commanding Station
PC	Provincial Commissioner
THD	Turkwel Hydro-electric Dam
WRMA	Water Resource Management Authority

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the arid and semi-arid Turkana and West Pokot, the two counties inhabited by the Turkana and Pokot people respectively in northern Kenya. West Pokot County borders Baringo and Elgeyo-Marakwet to the South East, Trans Nzoia to the South, Turkana to the North and North-East and Uganda to the west. On the other hand, Turkana County borders Baringo and West Pokot to the South, Marsabit to the East and Samburu counties to the South East. Pastoralism is largely, the mainstay of the Pokot and Turkana economies. However, 40 percent of the Pokot practice agriculture, crop produce.²

Over the years, the two communities' physical environment and developments therein patterned their relationship, creating a conflict and cooperation historical trajectory, the focus of this study. For example, the Kerio and Turkwel rivers are the only permanent sources of water for the Turkana and Pokot people. The rivers flow towards Lake Turkana from the Pokot territory. West Pokot is upstream while Turkana is the downstream riparian. Historically, the two communities have used water from these rivers to water their animals, irrigate areas along the river banks and for other household activities. However, the shared usage of water resulted in claims and counter claims of who owned the area in which those rivers run, impacting on the relations between the two riparians. The construction of the Turkwel dam further exacerbated their relations bringing a new dimension of conflict which this study focused on.

For years before the Turkwel dam, the Pokot and Turkana People had cordial trade relationships interspersed with intermittent cattle reciprocal raids and land disputes. The Turkana traded cattle, goats, honey, and sheep with the Pokot in exchange for tobacco and iron from which spears were made. However, the two experienced cattle rustling perpetrated by the Turkana against the Pokot in 1918³ and conflict over the lost land by the Pokot during the southward incursions by Ethiopia which displaced many people.⁴ The conflict disrupted their long standing trade relations.

² Mutsotso, B. (2015). 'The Role of Administrative Boundaries and Territories in Pastoral Conflicts and Mitigation efforts in north-western Kenya.' *Journal of African Affairs*, Vol 4 issue 1, University of Nairobi. pp.1-12.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

In this environment, hitherto dominated by inter-community linkages, on one hand, and hostility on the other, the Kenyan government and France, with the help of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD),⁵ came up with the idea of constructing Turkwel dam with thirty thousand hectares of land put under irrigation in Lorogon and Nakwomoru to act as the buffer zone between the Turkana and Pokot.⁶ Initially, all irrigation projects were under the National Irrigation Board (NIB) which was created in 1966 through an act of parliament, with the responsibility of transforming the arid, semi-arid and marginal areas into productive land. However, the designing and implementation development programmes in Turkana and Pokot shifted to Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA) after it was established in August 1979 through an act of parliament and inaugurated in June 1981.⁷

Firstly, before KVDA embarked on a multipurpose Turkwel hydro-electric dam at the gorge of Turkwel River, a Norwegian consulting firm Norconsult was called in to advice.⁸ There were various feasibility studies with the last one in 1984 by Preece, Cadrew, and Rider from the United Kingdom.⁹ In 1985 a French company, Spie Batignolles was awarded the contract to build the Turkwel dam. On the downside, the project was to displace an estimate of over 800 families with little or no compensation at all to the affected. Similarly, at its completion in 1991, the Dam produced 106 megawatts (MW) to the national grid.¹⁰ However, only two percent of Turkana County¹¹ and three percent of west Pokot residents are connected to electricity.¹²

⁵ Kenya National Assembly Official Record (1993), *Ministerial Statement Regarding Turkwel Gorge*. p.1425. Retrieved on 4th March 2018, from, <https://books.google.et/bookgs?>

⁶ Bii, B. (2011, Sep 18). 'Ministry in fresh drive to revive stalled irrigation projects.' *Sunday Nation*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/search?q=nation+newspaper&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b>.

⁷ Ng'weno, H. (Ed). (1986, January 2). Focus on irrigation. Turkwel: Looking to Future Power Supply. *Weekly review*. Ltd Agip house Nairobi. p. 9.

⁸ Macgoye, O.M. (Ed), (1983), *Stima an informal history of EAP&L*. The East African Power and lighting Company Limited. p. 393.

⁹ Kenya national Assembly Official Record (1993), p.1425.

¹⁰Macgoye (1983).p .393.

¹¹Ngugi, E. et al (2013). 'Exploring Kenya's Inequality: Pulling Apart or Pooling Together?' Turkana County. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. p.10.

¹²Ngugi, E. et al (2013). 'Exploring Kenya's Inequality: Pulling Apart or Pooling Together?' West Pokot County. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. p.14.

Whereas considerable attention is devoted to explaining the international water conflict and resolution,¹³ there is still a disproportionately poor understanding of inter-ethnic resource-based conflict and cooperation within a state, especially in a macro investing setting. It is against this background therefore that this study seeks to analyse water resource conflict and cooperation in Kenya by focusing on two communities of the Pokot and Turkana over Turkwel dam.

Building of the Turkwel dam did not only intend to address the country's electricity and irrigation problem but also ensure Turkana and Pokot communities are food secure. This, in return, could address the continued famine and more so the vicious conflict that led to underdevelopment among the two communities. Interestingly, under scrutiny, the dam achieved less and introduced a new dynamic to the already devastating conflict for the following reason. The project ignored the historical alienation of the two communities by the colonial administration and post-colonial governments, famine, drought, and cattle rustling conflict which was experienced in the region over time.

Therefore the arguments made in this study to explain the dynamics of the Turkwel dam are thus fourfold. First, before the dam, Pokot and Turkana only fought between April and June. This is the period each community has enough pasture and healthy livestock. The study refers to it as the rain period. Second, as immediate impacts, the construction of the dam dried up the river in the downstream; it displaced many people although in the same period it created casual or short term manual jobs for the locals. Third, both locally and internationally, the dam became a new field in Kenya on which there featured hydro-politics and state patronage. Lastly, the installation of the communication network at Turkwel dam for staff and locals influenced the *ngoroko* (warriors from both Turkana and Pokot) to acquire *mulika mwizi* (simple mobile phone). This drastically changed the dynamics of Pokot-Turkana conflict as it provided a platform on which both communities exploited.

Despite the complexes of Turkana and Pokot relations that involved different actors, dimensions, sectors, and phases, the study focused on their interrelations at Turkwel. The in-depth research at Turkwel Basin intentionally took an interethnic dimension in examining

¹³ Wolf, A. T. (1997). 'International water conflict resolution: lessons from comparative analysis.' *International journal of water resources development*, 13(3), pp. 333-366.

conflict and cooperation over water resource conflict between the two to enrich our understanding, context, and challenges they experienced before, during and after the introduction of a multipurpose Turkwel dam. The study assessed their relations, economic, political and social wellbeing to bring forth their priorities before the dam and the reasons as to why they did so, the kind of relations during construction and after completion with a focus on whether there was heightened or reduced conflict.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

The Pokot and Turkana are neighbouring pastoral communities in the North Rift Valley of Kenya. Prior to the British administration, the two, lived astride the Turkwel River valley, relatively insulated from the effects of the externally-driven regional commerce affecting other communities, especially those adjacent to the East African Coast.

Consequently, the Pokot and Turkana developed inter-community trade in honey, iron ware, shields, tobacco and wine.¹⁴ Equally, an intermittent reciprocal and ritually controlled cattle raiding was an important phenomenon in their relationship as was cultural intermingling and its corollary, acculturation.¹⁵ Indeed, early European travelers to the region, such as Harry Johnston, described the Pokot and Turkana as one people.¹⁶ Accordingly, the region is arid and semi-arid; the two communities struggled to maximize their share of limited grazing and watering recourses along the Turkwel River which in return led to conflict, especially during the rainy season.

However, there is limited research on Turkwel dam as a new dynamic and a factor that has entangled and renewed conflict between the Pokot and Turkana people hence the choice of the study. Most of the studies and reports over the Turkana and Pokot people have highlighted clan issues, boundary disputes, climate, and cattle raiding as part of causes of their conflict in Turkwel Basin and a little over Turkwel dam. Therefore, the choice of the study endeavored to add knowledge to a contemporary history of intercommunity conflicts shaped by a natural resource-water.

¹⁴ Odegi-Awoundo, C. (1990). *Life in the balance. Ecological sociology of Turkana nomads*. African centre for technology studies, Nairobi.p.32.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Lamphear, J. (1992). *The scattering time. Turkana responses to colonial rule*. University of Oxford, Clarendon press.p.46.

1.3 Research questions.

This study has attempted to answer the following questions.

1. Did the construction of Turkwel Dam heighten or reduce the conflict?
2. In what ways has the dam been used as a tool of cooperation between the two communities?
3. How has it impacted on their relations?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To examine the Pokot-Turkana relations before the building of the Turkwel dam.
2. To assess the new dynamics introduced by the building of the dam, 1984-1991.
3. To analyze the longer term impact of Turkwel Dam on the Pokot- Turkana Relationship.

1.5 Justification of the study

After the building and commissioning of Turkwel dam, Pokot and Turkana people at Turkwel experienced widespread conflict which was of great impact. The region prominently featured in the Kenyan media mainly from 2013 to 2014 over various issues. In 2014, for instance, there were reports of more than 30 deaths around the Turkwel in the villages of Alale, Amolem, Lokiriyama, Lorogon, Nakwomoru, Nyangaita, Samach and Tekeywa.¹⁷ Among the major issues in contention was the Turkwel dam.

The studies undertaken on the Pokot and Turkana conflict appeared to be silent on the impact of Turkwel dam to their relations and if mentioned, it was in passing. Therefore, there was lack of information concerning the linkage between natural resource and the relations of Pokot and Turkana which this study in-depth examines. The research also assesses both new short and long term socio-economic and political impacts of THD. The study will provide a relevant perspective in addressing the Pokot –Turkana challenges apart from adding to our knowledge.

¹⁷ Koskei, S. and Netya, W. (2014 Nov 16). 'Boundary the issue between Pokot, Turkana communities.' *The Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/search?q=standard+newspaper&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b>.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

The study traced the escalation and transformation of the conflict over the Turkwel dam between the Pokot and Turkana people from 1984 to 2015. 1984 was when an interim pre-investment study by the Sorghea consulting engineers from France was carried out. In the same year, socio-economic impact study was carried out by the African Development and Economic consultants. Another study was carried out in late 1984 considering the generation and economic aspects of the project.¹⁸ The study ended in 2015 when the Pokot and Turkana had a peace agreement signed at Turkwel in December of that year following various consultation meetings that involved the communities. The date is important as it is commemorated every December between the two communities to reflect on achievements and setbacks since they signed the peace agreement.

The research was conducted in Pokot and Turkana counties, the region under which the Turkwel River traverses. The specific area of research included Amolem, Kainuk, Kasei, Lokapel, Lokiriama, Lorogon, Nakwomoru, Ombolion and Riting'i both in Turkana and Pokot counties.

However, some factors were a limitation to the research in these areas. Personal safety and security while visiting these areas were of great concern. Places like Kainuk and Lorogon, in Turkana South, is found along the hotly contested border between the two communities. Most of the people are suspicious of visitors, and their response could have hindered getting the much needed information. This also applied to areas in Pokot Northwest such as Kasei, Nasolot and Riting'i where the respondents displayed suspicion and hostility. However, to overcome these, I employed two research assistants each from both side and able to understand and translate Pokot and Turkana languages. The two helped in the translation of the research questions and also explain to the population the purpose of the research. Furthermore, the nature of the information on the conflict over Turkwel dam tended to be sensitive and confidential due to its repercussion and seemed to impend access to the full information. The respondents also feared to give away sensitive information on raids and injured victims due to the repercussions. Furthermore, some parts of Pokot North district have a difficult terrain with

¹⁸ Kenya National assembly Official Record (1997 Sep 24). 'Pre-investment study for Turkwel dam.' Retrieved from [https://books.google.co.ke/Kenya+National+assembly+Official+Record+\(1997+Sep+24\).+Pre-investment+study+for+Turkwel+dam](https://books.google.co.ke/Kenya+National+assembly+Official+Record+(1997+Sep+24).+Pre-investment+study+for+Turkwel+dam).

very steep hills and valleys, places like Kasei being hard to access due to poor roads. However, this was overcome by hiring a motorbike that could access the remote areas. Lastly, due to scant literature that specifically focused on the Turkwel dam conflict, I focused on the literature from the international, Kenya and then Turkwel.

1.7 Literature Review

There have been extensive studies on conflict among and between the Pokot and Turkana people. Studies reviewed in this research took various perspectives in explaining the conflict between the two communities. Some took an environmental approach and argued that the change caused cooperation and conflicts due to the diminishing basic resources while others viewed cattle rustling as the cause of conflict between the Pokot and Turkana people. Similarly, others asserted that conflict arose over administrative boundaries between the two communities. Also, a high possibility of conflict was suggested where a weak riparian in the upper stream diverted water, which as a result, affected a strong militaristic downstream nation. Others focused on commercialization of cattle rustling as a cause of conflict between the Pokot and Turkana people. However, there has been no systematic research conducted over the dynamics which came with the construction of the Turkwel dam over the Turkana and Pokot people relations, therefore, the study using the reviewed literature from the international, Kenya and then the Turkwel Basin, seeks to explain the Turkana Pokot relations in the introduction of Turkwel dam .

Water is a basic need that plays a major role in human life. Apart from drinking, domestic use like laundry, cooking, hygienic purposes, water is so essential for food security especially among small holders for irrigation, economic production, and environmental needs. However, Molle and Mollinga predict a looming water crisis where some countries will face water scarcity by 2025.¹⁹ This is due to the increasing water requirements estimated to grow by 25 and 57 percent. Therefore, deprivation of water by any party may mean poverty and offense to human right and dignity.

Conversely, water scarcity can be seen in various categories; the physical scarcity where water is only in specific wells and natural rivers mostly found in the arid and desert areas. Secondly,

¹⁹Molle, F. & Mollinga, P. (2003). 'Water Poverty Indicators: Conceptual problems and Policy Issues.' *Water Policy Vol 5*. pp.529-544.

economic scarcity where water available is insufficient to cater for the economic production and fulfill human needs and wants.²⁰ Thirdly is the managerial scarcity which results from poor management of water transition from the reservoir through leaking pipes. Water scarcity also arises from the institutional induced mechanism, where for example, in the upstream; a new pattern of water flow is introduced. This can be the construction of a huge dam intended for large scale irrigation and even hydro-electricity production. Lastly is the political water scarcity, where people are barred from accessing water because they are in a situation of political subordination. This study gives various types of water scarcities experienced globally. It will be interesting to examine if such water poverty indicators are witnessed in Turkwel region from the construction of THD. If they do, do they cause conflict or cooperation to the two communities?

Mbote examines upstream –downstream power relations between nations in explaining what could happen in case one nation interfered with the flow of water. The writer asserts that a militarily stronger downstream nation is easily tempted to go into war with a weak upstream nation in case the flow of water is interrupted by either the construction of the dam for electricity production or irrigation purposes and hence instigate an institutional induced water scarcity in the downstream.²¹ The article gave an example of Egypt, a strong military state and Ethiopia a weak state. However, though there have been political tensions between the two states when Ethiopia, a ‘weak’ state went ahead to build the huge Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) dam on Blue River, an essential feeder of the Nile River. Historically, the Turkana community in the downstream of Turkwel River was politically and militarily more powerful than settled agriculturist, in this case, the Pokot²², and therefore it will be exciting to examine how the two communities related after the deprivation of Turkwel River by the construction of Turkwel Dam. Secondly, it helped asses if the conflicts that were experienced by the Pokot and Turkana people due to political incitement and celebration of the culture of heroism had connections with the Turkwel dam.²³ This study gives a comparison in a situation where a resource that is depended on over time by a strong downstream is diverted by a ‘weak’ upstream nation and how their responses will either lead to conflict or reconciliation and the

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Mbote P, K. (2007). ‘Water, Conflict and Cooperation: Lessons from the Nile River Basin.’ No4. *Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars*. p.2.

²² Odegi (1990), p.29.

²³ Okumu, W. (2013). ‘Trans-local peace building among pastoralist communities in Kenya .The case of Laikipia peace forum.’ *Culture and environment in Africa series, issue 3 cologne African studies centre*. p. 9.

steps to be taken. The research is relevant in a way that it gives the insights of how nations relate before and after a resource is interfered with in upper stream riparian. However, the researcher is aware of Pokot and Turkana people being under the jurisdiction of Kenyan and therefore required to conform to its laws unlike nation to nation relations which are international.

Okidi argues that water conflict occurs in situations where there are no water frameworks on the sharing of the resource. This is especially true where the upstream state has absolute territorial integrity and does not need any obligation to permit flow of water downstream²⁴ while the downstream riparian objects to any kind of diversion either through the construction of the dam, irrigation or for any industrial purposes. However, this does not justify water wars between the riparian countries instead water treaties, and possibly arbitral tribunal must be embraced to guide on the misunderstanding that might occur between the riparian states that share water in a given region.²⁵ The paper highlights the need for treaties and diplomacy in resolving water issues. This evokes questions to whether there are water treaties and diplomacy in case of interethnic resource sharing, more so the Turkana –Pokot over the Turkwel dam. Are there any traditional mechanisms put in place by the two communities which can be adopted by the relevant authorities so that the challenges the communities experienced by Pokot and Turkana can be addressed?

Wolf asserts that there are no agreed upon mechanisms to enforce the usage of water. This is despite much being expected from the international law, which is mainly concerned with the rights and responsibilities of states. Complicating the issue further is the formed litigation or arbitration that has got few specialized institutions for law making and enforcing the same.²⁶ For instance, the cases heard by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on specific points of law, had the consent of the parties involved, however, it had no practical enforcement mechanism existing to back up courts finding. Therefore, it was easier for responsible communities or nations to disclaim court or parliament findings. The study is relevant because it invokes various questions whether the two communities have taken any legal action over the other and if so was it related to water challenges?

²⁴ Okidi, C. O. (2014). 'Nile Waters: The Threat of War Is Not Justifiable in Modern Times.' *Environmental Policy and Law*, 44(1/2), p.176.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Wolf, A. (1999). 'The Heart of International water Conflict.' *Natural resources forum*. Vol 23.1, pp. 3-30.

As consequence disputes often took the form of upstream riparian similar to Ethiopia verses Egypt and Turkey verses Israel arguing in favour of the doctrine of absolute sovereignty, with the downstream riparian taking the position of historic rights.²⁷The study aroused new insights into the laws of water. Are there any laws that govern water in Kenya? Does it apply locally and is the local aware of them? Thus, the study sought to investigate the traditional beliefs associated with water and how modernity that was imported to the Turkana and Pokot by the construction of the dam impacted to their relations.

Odegi asserts that large state projects such as multipurpose dam resulted in social impacts like the emergence of towns and shopping centers nearer to the project. The introduction of Irrigation schemes along Turkwel River led to a large population of Turkana, Pokot and other communities from the country side to move to the upcoming concentration centers²⁸ and work as fishermen, fish mongers and farmers and hence competition over ownership. Accordingly, the irrigation schemes along the Turkwel River were bone of contention between the Turkana and Pokot people. For instance, the upstream Weiwei Irrigation project to the downstream of Kamorok and Lorokon irrigation schemes has been fought over. Each community wanted ownership of those specific projects. The schemes did not have the boards which could have formulated integration development among the communities.

Even before Turkwel dam was constructed Pokot and Turkana conflicted over boundary issues as each community claimed to have the original and correct map to back their claims. The two communities claimed ownership of the villages of Apike, Lorogon, and Ombolion all which are nearer the Turkwel Dam.²⁹Those that controlled a village territory or shifted an administrative boundary enhanced their survival as a group over the others, and that functioned as motivation for Pokot and Turkana to engage in violent conflict to protect their valued resources.³⁰The war was fought partly to determine who would continue pastoralism and who would not and those conflicts were shaped by the strategic map of water-points and dry seasons. Those that lost their livestock, grazing and watering points lost their identity.³¹ Initially, the struggles for resources become quite grim between the Turkana and Pokot especially by every

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Odegi (1990), p.82.

²⁹ Mutsotso (2015), p.2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Spear, T. & Waller, R. (1993). *Being Maasai. Ethnicity & Identity in East Africa*. James Currey London. p.291.

January or February of each year when the livestock heavily concentrated in the last areas of available grazing. Conversely, despite their hostilities, they shared the resources, and their closest associations of these communities were often focused on watering point because they were unable to gain a clear advantage of each other.³² The book apart from recognizing the impact of small scale developments along the Turkwel River gives an account of how the two communities related over time.

Mutsotso et al. view the conflict between Pokot and Turkana as emanating from the competition over cattle ownership.³³ Cattle to the Pokot are essential in various ways. They used in rituals, and whenever they had any, an animal had to be slaughtered. Secondly, in case there was a dispute between families or communities and a resolution arrived at, traditionally a fine was to be paid in form of cattle. Lastly, cattle were so essential that they were used as gifts during marriage and restocking after a devastating drought or famine. Therefore, such activities involving cattle explains why the two communities fought over the ownership of cattle hence the conflict. The work was relevant as it informed my research on the conflict that was experienced by the communities before the introduction of the Turkwel dam.

Mutsotso, on the other hand, argues that the Pokot and Turkana did not only fight over ownership of cattle but also, over the boundary which was 'demarcated' by River Turkwel.³⁴ This compares well with a similar study carried out in West Africa among the Mauritania and Senegal ethnic groups in 1989 which reported an estimate 400 or more deaths which were a result of fighting over the control of Senegal River which also served as a boundary for two different ethnic groups. Like the Pokot and Turkana, the trouble began over competing claims to farming rights on the common border of the Senegal River. The reason was, irrigation project had increased the value of land and made the Mauritians, traditionally herdsman, less inclined to allow Senegalese to cultivate both sides of the border.³⁵ The two studies are relevant to my project as they all touches on water conflict between the agriculturists and herders.

³² Lamphear (1992), p.14.

³³Mutsotso, B. et al (2014). 'The role of cattle in the social organization of the East Pokot pastoralist of north western Kenya.' *Eur Sci* 10(8), pp.491-507.

³⁴ Mutsotso (2015), p.6.

³⁵Gleditsch P.N. et al (2006). 'Conflict over shared Rivers: Resource scarcity or fuzz boundaries.' *Political Geography* 25.pp.361-382.

It is noted that some Turkana people, who lived along Turkwel River apart from keeping animals, practiced agriculture production such as grain for domestic use and exchange in ghee, iron, meat, milk, pots, tobacco, and small stock with the Pokot.³⁶ To supplement agriculture and animal husbandry in severe droughts, they went fishing. However, in the period between 1895-1925, the British troops fought and robbed them animals to contain their movements. By the time colonial control was finally being established over the Turkana, they were already poor people needing emergency relief.³⁷ The research informs the study on what the economic activity of community was before the construction of the Turkwel dam. Secondly, the study informs how the colonial regime impacted these communities.

It is evident, therefore, that in the pre-colonial period the Pokot and Turkana coexisted well in spite of the sporadic raids and conflict which were in many cases successfully regulated by the elders from both sides. It is from such raids that bride wealth was paid which in return encouraged intermarriages between the two pastoral neighbours. However, this changed after the two communities acquired AK-47 rifles. There were not only increased raids and deaths due to the perceived enmity between the Pokot and Turkana people but also heightened ambushes by both the Pokot and Turkana communities to the then administration to acquire more guns.³⁸ This was after the foreigners had regarded them as backward and disrupting their peaceful co-existence by creating misunderstanding, suspicion, mistrust, and hostility. For instance, this was the Swahili, Arab and Habash who came for ivory and slaves from the region and later on European explorers, hunters, adventurers and colonial agents who came along with sophisticated fire arms that further complicated their relations. Among them was Count Samuel Teleki who regarded natives as monkeys and boasted of having shot dead 300 during the expedition to Lake Turkana with Von Hohnell in 1888.³⁹ Similarly, a Greek locally known as Bwana Tembo, whipped and abused his African porters without pay for their work. These newcomers also took raiding in livestock, ivory, slaves for personal gain. They were superior over the locals as they had their guns.⁴⁰ These studies do not look at water conflict between the Pokot and Turkana communities; however, they are helpful in understanding the impact of colonial rule the Pokot and Turkana people.

³⁶ Odegi (1990), p.30.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Gray, S et al (2003). 'Cattle Raiding, Cultural Survival and Adaptability of East Africa Pastoralists.' *Current Anthropology*. Vol 44.pp.53-530.

³⁹ Odegi (1990), p.46.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Conversely, Krätli and Swift argue that the commercialization of cattle rustling is what heightened the conflict between the Turkana and Pokot. To them, the raids earned both the Pokot and Turkana guns on credit and even went ahead to look for markets prior to the raided animals.⁴¹ Accordingly, their relations began to deteriorate due to the web of conflicting foreign interests in the raided cattle. Indeed, the 1907-1908 rinderpest outbreaks that nearly wiped out Turkana cattle and the 1910-1911 unidentified cattle disease that killed off at least half the population of cattle belonging to the Karamoja and Pokot led the communities to step up the raiding as their ecological balance had been disturbed. Security problems escalated as guns were used instead of spears and sticks in raiding. The Krätli and Swift study acknowledges that though the Turkana and Pokot communities raided to restock the lost animals due to drought, rinderpest, and unknown diseases, there was another new factor, the commercialization of cattle rustling which was vicious and hugely impacted on the Pokot and Turkana relations. The study also explained the dynamics of Pokot – Turkana relations overtime and how the introduction of guns impacted on the conflict.

Such dynamics including the aridity that struck the region before the construction of Turkwel dam influenced the majority of Turkana and Pokot people to opt for animal husbandry. However, as the challenges persisted they switched in large numbers to farming. Turkwel river floods, therefore, became so essential for irrigating their small plots along the banks.⁴² In return, the Turkana people at the downstream complained of river banks becoming arid due to excessive use of water upstream for modern mechanized agriculture in the upper stream.⁴³ One example was the Katilu irrigation scheme which was commissioned in 1966 in the upstream and expanded beyond what the Turkwel River could support.⁴⁴ This study highlights how most water conflict emanates from the question of equitable allocation or what is referred to as the administrative scarcity and the how the criteria and application of water sharing agreement along the volatile water ways of the globe is a prerequisite to hydro political stability.⁴⁵ Whenever that is not achieved then conflict will be inevitable as water assures the survival of population and animals to those pastoral communities.

⁴¹ Krätli, S. & Swift, J. (2003). *Understanding and managing pastoral conflict in Kenya*. University of Sussex. p.3.

⁴² Odegi (1990), p.76.

⁴³ Mbote (2007), p.3.

⁴⁴ Odegi (1990), p.77.

⁴⁵ Wolf (1999), p.20.

According to Mutsotso, hostilities between these communities were inevitable especially in areas which lie near water and or pasture⁴⁶ guaranteed their survival and that of their animals. In this case, Turkwel dam is more strategic to the raiders and profitable too due to the high concentration of Pokot -Turkana and their animals' hence easy target. Based on the same, Pokot and Turkana have extreme principles and argument on either hydro-graphy. They both claim the river or aquifer, where it originates and how much of that territory falls within their community. Similarly, they put consideration on who has used the water the longest time than the other. Indeed, the Turkana depended on the River Turkwel longer because they were in the total arid region and equally in the downstream though it originated from the Pokot territory.

The literature reviewed in this study generally acknowledges the existence of a conflict between the Turkana and Pokot people. However, there is no clear research on how the construction of the Turkwel dam changed the dynamics and relations of these two communities.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The research was based on two theories, the challenge and response theory, and the urban revolution theory. Challenge and response theory was developed by a British historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, in his work *A Study of History*. Toynbee argued that to understand the history of any civilization one required a comparative approach. He carried out his study on twenty one types of civilizations that had risen and fallen. The researches were on different races and environment. He tested against all the others that had existed and treated them as if they were 'philosophically contemporary' to one another. In a comparative analysis, Toynbee argued that it was possible to find similarities between any given civilizations. The approach considered the periods of genesis, growth, breakdown, and disintegration of those specific societies in any given environment.

However, the focus was not only on explaining the likenesses, but also establishing the causes for those various phases in the histories of civilizations. For example, the force behind disintegration, universal churches, empires growth, and even breakdown was the human agency or human creativity and not racial superiority and inferiority. Similarly, civilizations 'grew' as various societies experienced social challenges that they responded to (and

⁴⁶ Mutsotso (2015), p.2.

overcome) by being creative often on the margins of society or in some form of exile and adapting to the new way of life.⁴⁷ Indeed, when a society is confronted in the course of its life by a succession of problems each member has to solve for itself as best it may⁴⁸ because the presentation of each problem is a challenge to undergo an ordeal, and through this series of ordeals the members of the society progressively differentiate themselves from one another.

Toynbee argued that those populations that faced challenges of desiccation and never changed their habitat or way of life paid the penalty of extinction. Therefore the theory is applied to explain the Turkana and Pokot way of life especially after the introduction of the dam. Initially, due to various challenges like colonialism, drought, hunger and scarcity of water essential for their animals forced them to move closer to the Turkwel River. Although they experienced a new challenge of seasonal cold the wet river banks and continued supply of pasture for their livestock was crucial for their animals and their subsistence agriculture. Some of the Pokot and Turkana population underwent total transformation due to desiccation by changing their habitat, and their way of life alike and the rare double reaction was the dynamic act which created civilization or modernity out of primitive society from food gatherers and hunters into cultivators.⁴⁹ Though the change in habitat was small regarding distance, it was vast if measured by the difference in character between the grassland which they abandoned and the new physical environment which they now made their home.

Toynbee's theory is further used to explain that even before the Turkwel dam, the two population experienced water scarcity. However, there was the aspect of cooperation and conflict over resources between the Pokot and Turkana. They put in place mechanism on how to share the scarce natural resource during the dry period. In the period of plenty they experienced water and pasture resource conflict in a smaller magnitude until the dam was introduced that came with a new dynamic.

The construction of the dam served as a blessing and a curse. In the initial stages, it displaced the population and even changed the ecology with claims and counter claims over its ownership. Those displaced claimed compensation and right of ownership. As its new dynamic, during the construction period, the locals were employed as casual labourers. However, many

⁴⁷ Toynbee, A. (1960). *A Study of History*. Oxford University Press, Amen House, London E.C.4 p.4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

were injured while some succumbed to injuries. The downstream experienced reduced and silt water which affected both the people and their socio-economic activities.

After its completion the Turkwel dam provided the population with fishing, employment and electricity generation. They were also promised mechanized agriculture of over 3000 acres. However, there were challenges in fishing and storage facilities, security and agriculture did not pick up to them as an immediate impact, there was a reduced flow of water in the downstream creating a new challenge to these two communities. The challenge and response theory explained how societies identified their challenges and managed them.

Gordon Childe in his work titled *The Urban Revolution* argues that the city symbolized a revolution which initiated a new economic stage in the evolution of society and culmination of progressive change. According to Childe, the revolution was almost total transformation of social institutions and practices and how there were a series of interrelated social, economic, political and cultural changes that led to the earliest 'modernity'.⁵⁰ Childe and Toynbee concur in the sense that they speak of modernity and civilization where regimes plan and establish systems under which surplus is extracted from the peasants and gathered in a central place. The theory shows how the change in economic lifestyles due to the introduction of modern technology of production to the people who were termed or seen as 'uncivilized' had various impacts.

They both gave an example of societies in the Nile valleys that previously practiced nomadism but at one point gave up the mobile lifestyle and adopted the agricultural way of life by domesticating key species of plant and animals. Therefore, the two suggests that as social challenges come by, human beings improvised new ways to address them and in the event knowledge is created which they referred to as modernity or civilization.

Childe's theory is used to explain how a remote area like Turkwel is revolutionized by the construction of the dam. The region was promised mechanized agriculture, fishing, electricity production, tourist destination, two airstrips, telecommunication and state lodge. The revolution⁵¹ aimed at transforming the region and making it food sufficient. However, the

⁵⁰ Childe G, V. (1950). 'The Urban Revolution.' *The Town Planning Review*, Liverpool University Press Vol. 21, No. 1. pp. 3-17.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

economic revolution ended up adding a new dynamic to the already existing issues. The telecommunication introduced a new dynamic to the conflict. The communities used the network to coordinate the conflicts, highway banditry and robberies.

Childe's theory is relevant to the study; firstly, it strengthens Toynbee's model of challenge and response. Apart from accounting for Turkana and Pokot experiences before and after the Turkwel dam it also explains how their responses, taken informed by the environment they were situated in. Secondly, it helps in explaining the transformation under which the two communities underwent due to the introduction of Turkwel dam to their region. These transformations are and not only limited to the economy, social, and political but also associated with the infrastructure in the region, technology, and political information due to the macro developments such as Turkwel dam.

1.9 Research Hypothesis

This study was based on the following hypotheses:

1. The Pokot and Turkana communities had a symbiotic relationship before the construction of the Turkwel dam.
2. Turkwel Dam construction introduced new dynamics to the Pokot and Turkana communities.
3. The Turkwel Dam had multiple long term impacts on the relations between the two communities.

1.10 Methodology

The study is qualitative and used both secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources included books and articles from scholarly journals. I utilized relevant books and journals found in the University of Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML), British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA), the Kenya Power and KenGen libraries at Ngara Nairobi, Nation Media Library housed in Nation Centre, Nairobi, and the Standard Media library at Standard Group limited on Mombasa road in Nairobi. In both BIEA and JKML I read books on Pokot and Turkana and how they related over time. At KenGen, I was able to read reports and interview some of the staff that had previously worked at Turkwel dam. In Standard and Nation newspaper libraries, I read newspapers over Turkana and Pokot provinces/ counties and hence their relations.

The study also used archival materials and oral interviews. Archival materials were found in the Kenya National and Documentation Archives (KNDA). They included provincial annual reports, handing over reports and letters by colonial masters from both Turkana and Pokot regions. This helped the researcher in understanding the historical relationship between the Pokot and Turkana around the Turkwel Dam before and after the construction of the Turkwel dam.

I acquired a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation to enable me to go to the field. While in the field, I worked closely with the *nyumba kumi* (ten homesteads) leaders, GSU officers, KenGen officials, Kenya Red Cross officials, Anti stock theft police, health officials, teachers, church leaders, provincial administration leaders, and the KVDA workers. That enabled me to counter suspicion from local people. I employed oral interviews with an open-ended questionnaire that had guiding questions. That left the interviewee with adequate room to talk and give additional information regarding the research. I mostly took notes and only in one occasion was I allowed recording due to the sensitivity and fear in the area.

To overcome the language barrier, I employed two research assistants, one from the Pokot community and another from the Turkana community. They helped in translations during interviews with local respondents. Data was collected from various respondents.

Through a teacher and a resident of Pokot County, I got the contact of the office of Managing Director (MD) of KVDA where I was able to get documents on the dam. Then from the office, I was introduced to the other staff down, the Turkwel dam. Secondly, through one of my master's classmate, I was able to get the contact of Tegla Lorupe peace organization which is involved with peace projects in the north rift and Turkwel in particular. This was essential in getting other important contacts in peace committees in the area. They included people who are versed with the dam and more so representative of the Turkana and Pokot people.

Similarly, my classmate linked me with his friends that had worked in the Turkwel offices before and who are currently in Ngara offices. The former staffs gave the researcher with encounters of their stay at Turkwel and how they were view by the locals and their specific role. Also working on work study basis at the Student Welfare Authority of the University of

Nairobi was I able to make contacts with students from both Turkana and Pokot counties that linked me with contact people in the research area.

Also, through my undergraduate lecturer, Dr. Mutsotso, who has a research interest in the same area, I was able to get contacts of local elders and teachers who are relevant to this study. Through them, I was able to get chiefs from both the communities at Turkwel. Similarly, my undergraduate classmates, in Kapenguria and a resident of west Pokot gave me the contact a doctor under Red Cross who was of great importance to my study and a link to the NGOs that are working in Turkwel and how they dealt with the casualties during and after the conflict. The researcher was able to interview 32 informants so that the data collected was not one sided and ensured diverse perspective concerning the Turkwel dam. I interviewed ten elders aged fifty years and above from each community. Some had worked as casual labourers during the construction of the dam while others were those who were displaced by the introduction of the dam. This is because the dam was being constructed, they were aged twenty years able to remember those who were affected by the project. I also interviewed five youths who were the sons and daughters of some the elders from each community to get their opinion on the dam concerning the activities they were involved in and how beneficial it was to them.

Lastly, through a non-participant observation, I was able to see how the dam impacted the downstream riparian, from Lorogon all the way to Lodwar town. Similarly, the research team accessed the dilapidated presidential lodge and also visited fishing activities at Riting'i, the two bushy airstrips, the unattended houses, bar, and what used to be a supermarket and two swimming pools in Sorghea camp. Additionally, we observed the building of a perimeter wall around the French camp which was ongoing. Conversely, the researchers accompanied a team of Pokot and Turkana leaders from Nakwomoru in Turkana County to Kesei in Pokot County where a young herder from the Pokot was kidnapped by Turkana warriors and witnessed the entire process of handing back the boy to his family.

CHAPTER TWO

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO POKOT- TURKANA RELATIONS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the historical Pokot- Turkana relations up to 1984 before the construction of the Turkwel dam. The chapter postulates that reciprocal and perennial cattle raids notwithstanding, the Pokot and Turkana, historically were longtime ‘allies’⁵² in an ecological setting which often encouraged interdependency through either peaceful or hostile mechanisms. For example, in times of sufficient rainfall and the consequent pasture as well as the good health of animals, the cattle rustling incidences went up between the two communities. This was because the healthier the animals, the longer the distance they could walk during the raids. Therefore, during the period of plenty, the Pokot and Turkana fought each other over cattle; during the drought seasons they cooperated for mutual dependency and survival. This contradicts the usual explanations of cattle rustling as a function of pasture shortage. Conversely, the drier spells were the most peaceful seasons among the pastoral communities due to the traditional mechanisms put in place to promote equitable sharing of little available water and pasture resources.

Nevertheless, regular conflicts together with other external factors like a hut tax on their cattle, loss of life, loss of land, hunger and poverty posed challenges to them which they responded in different ways. Indeed, the Pokot and Turkana people were hit most by the colonial government rules, hunger, and famine. In return, the two, though unwillingly, in large numbers, abandoned the mountains and opted for the plains and close to the Turkwel River.

2.2 Turkwel Region, Turkana and Pokot people and their way of life.

The Turkwel region, partly arid and semi-arid area in large northern Kenya is mainly the home of Pokot and Turkana people. However, it also hosts workers and business people from outside the region. It is in this ecological zone that Turkwel dam was constructed about 150 kilometers (km) west of Lake Turkana and 150 km from Kitale. The dam has a reservoir of 40 km long

⁵² Lamphear, J. (1992). *The scattering time: Turkana responses to colonial rule*. University of Oxford, Clarendon Press.p.107.

and a capacity of 66 km square when full.⁵³ It derives its name from Turkwel River that traverses Pokot and Turkana counties which at times is also acknowledged as the boundary between the two communities to pour its waters in the Lake Turkana.⁵⁴ Notably, most of the Pokot and Turkana people are forced to live astride Turkwel River as most of their life depends on it.

Turkwel area has two seasons; wet season, *akumu*⁵⁵ with higher fighting and the dry season, *agiporo*⁵⁶ with the decreased conflict between Pokot and Turkana people. Similarly, the dry season is regarded as peace time due to the encouraged integration between the two⁵⁷ over the two major rivers of Turkwel and Kerio that flows continuously from April to September.⁵⁸ Turkana district with an area of 77,000 km²⁵⁹ receives rainfall between April and June in the east and northern parts while May to June it rains in the south and western parts.

It is important to note however that the Turkwel River and its main tributaries have wealth in gigantic thorn trees, dense forests and bush with grass, up to nearly three miles wide in place.⁶⁰ Therefore, it was easier for the Pokot and Turkana people settle and supplement their water needs by digging deep holes along the river banks during the drier seasons. They easily, with their animals, moved and practiced nomadism along the Turkwel River, unlike other parts that had poverty of vegetation. For example, cattle fed on grass while in the extreme were camels that fed on shrubs with goats and sheep as the only that grazed at both ends. This, in the end, determined the areas those animals were kept. Notably, these animals functioned as insurance which assumed partnership ties in their clans.⁶¹ For their continuity, therefore, water was significant not only for domestic use but also pasture for their animals which as a result led to

⁵³ Renshaw, M., Birley, M. H., Sang, D. K., & Silver, J. B. (1998). 'A rapid health impact assessment of the Turkwel Gorge hydroelectric dam and proposed irrigation project.' *Impact assessment and project appraisal*, 16(3), pp.215-226.

⁵⁴ Lamphear, J. (1976). 'Aspects of Turkana leadership during the era of primary resistance.' *The Journal of African History*, 17(02), pp.225-243.

⁵⁵ Gulliver, P. H (1966). *The Family Herds. A Study of Two Pastoral Tribes in East Africa. The Jie and Turkana*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.London.p.21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Oba, G. (1992). *Ecological factors in land use conflicts, land administration and food insecurity in Turkana, Kenya*. London: ODI.p.27.

⁶⁰ Gulliver (1966), p. 24.

⁶¹ Odegi (1990), p.17.

contestation between the Pokot and Turkana people over land and watering points between the two communities.⁶²

Socially and economically, the Turkana are one people with the Dodoth, Jie, and Karamojong of Uganda, the Nyangatom and Toposa of Ethiopia and South Sudan respectively. They share a lot including the common boundaries that were created by the colonial administrators. They lead a subsistence lifestyle and keep cattle, camels, donkeys, goats, and sheep as their main stay.⁶³ Traditionally, they had a division of labour where men and youths graze animals while women do the watering. As an adaptive method, they split and distribute their surplus animals to avoid deaths during the famine. Similarly, during the drought period, women collect wild berries along the Turkwel River, cook, and milk and build huts while youth and men between the ages of 15 to 50 participate in raiding.⁶⁴ Additionally, before or after the raid in a particular night, they slaughter a bull and hold *akimurmur*⁶⁵ dance which was later borrowed by the Pokot people.

Notably, Turkana's stable economy, military, and political power unlike the settled agriculturist, impressed the early European travellers who described them as the better-fed and healthier in east Africa.⁶⁶ However, as time went by, the Turkana people diversified their pastoral economy because for two reasons; on the one hand, to utilize a vast land suitable for agriculture along the river banks. On the other, they had large herds and fishing option in Lake Turkana and along Turkwel River which gave them an opportunity to establish wide and peaceful contacts with their neighbours mainly the Pokot and facilitated long distance trade in iron wares, grains, and tobacco from the Pokot in exchange with food along Turkwel River⁶⁷ hence symbiosis.⁶⁸

To supplement their trade, they also practiced raiding, hunting and gathering with the aim of getting food full of protein and ivory that was sold to the Arabs, Swahili, and Habash. As a result, they bought sophisticated guns and stepped up raiding to restock. With raids and counter

⁶² Renshaw et al (1998), p. 216.

⁶³ Barton, J. (1921). 'Notes on the Turkana Tribe of British East Africa, Part II.' *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 20(79), pp. 204-211.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Odegi (1990), p.30.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

raids during the rainy season and the assimilation of the conquered neighbours, the Turkana expanded their territory, power and wealth in the *eturkan*. For instance, armed by the Abyssinian administration with an aim to expand her territory southwards and hunt for ivory in the middle of the nineteenth century,⁶⁹ they simply capitalized on the weakened communities like the Pokot after the famine and epidemic diseases which hit and killed their animals to displace them.

However, in 1910 the British responded, and they created Northern Frontier District (NFD)⁷⁰ to control movement and manage their expansion. However, contention between the Pokot and Turkana heightened over areas that assured vegetation and water for animals. More devastating the British carried an expedition in 1915 and an estimated 400 deaths of the Turkana people and over 20,000 cattle, 100,000 goats and sheep seized.⁷¹ Additionally, the subjection to military rule restricted their movement in and out of the region and treated it as a “special area” until the early 1920s, forced the Turkana to dwell in agriculture to supplement their diminishing cattle wealth along the south, Turkwel River.

The colonial administration posts created to manage the Turkana were slowly turned into trading centers such as Garba Tulla. However, by 1918-19, they were mainly dominated by outsiders like the Indians, Ethiopians, Arabs, and Swahilis as they were the only people allowed to trade or own shops. Whereas Turkana’s only few employment opportunities outside pastoralism before the Second World War were government chief, police or army and a few as road builders on a casual basis. The only alternative for them, therefore, was to trade their livestock and diversify outside pastoralism. However, by this time, they had few animals left. To replenish their stock, the Turkana intensified cattle raiding on their neighbours.

The poor who were largely affected with the colonial administration were forced stick with pastoralism while a few rich diversified. For example, the rich Turkana took loans and insurances to educate their children whom they latter financed them to venture into other types of businesses. The double discrimination from the colonial administrators and a few rich people

⁶⁹ Lamphear (1992), p.108.

⁷⁰ Hogg, R. (1986). ‘The new pastoralism: poverty and dependency in northern Kenya.’ *Africa*, 56(03), pp.319-333.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

in the community forced a large number of the Turkana to opt into farming and fishing along River Turkwel.

On the other hand, the Pokot, a Kalenjin group of the Southern Nilotic people were classified according to their mode of life. Generally, the colonialist referred to them as *Suk*,⁷² a Maasai name owing to the small sword worn by the mountain Pokot. Notably, the Pokot people are divided into two. The pastoral, referred to as the *pi-pa-tich*,⁷³ or the people of cattle that graze their animals and the settled, called *pi-pa-pagh*⁷⁴ or the people of flour. They were both then divided further into various sub-divisions according to their settlements. Historically, the *Kasauria* inhabited Chemeronge Hills in the areas of Tenduguit, Chemerongit, Korosi, Ribko, and Masol and came into contact with Turkana together with the *Kabcheriko* who lived in the same Chemeronge Hills in the area of Kirogoh, Chepkariat and Tirioko. The others were the *Kiplegit* that spread in almost all areas and the *Mnage* and *Sekerr* that occupied Mnage Hills and Turkwel Gorge respectively.⁷⁵ Similarly, the *Cheptulel* settled in the escarpment bordering Chebleng and Masol plains; the *Kurut* stayed around Wei Wei River, Maerich, Bongo, and Masol while the *Magan* inhabited Chachai and part of Sekerr.⁷⁶

Those in the mountains practiced agriculture along the Turkwel River while those in plains entirely practiced herding and nomad life. Conversely, all the Pokot people, in the beginning, practiced agriculture and kept a small number of cattle that were mostly hunted down by the wild animals. They only became fully both agriculturist and pastoralist after a wizard arose among them and prepared a charm in the form of a stick and placed it into the cattle kraals of the Sambur people. The action killed all of their cattle⁷⁷ and prompted them to move out and occupy their region to date.

Similar to their counterpart, the Turkana, the 1760-1840 droughts influenced the Pokot people way of life. The drought haunted them and dried up Lake Baringo and Nakuru affecting their agricultural activities and fueled their exodus from the mountain. As a result, they picked up

⁷²Du Plessis, L. (2005). *The culture and environmental ethic of the Pokot people of Laikipia, Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch).p. 67.

⁷³ Barton, J. (1921).). 'Notes on the Suk Tribe of Kenya Colony.' *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. Pp. 82-99.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Du Plessis (2005), p. 68.

pastoralism along the Turkwel River like the Turkana people and thus a means of social and economic prescription that assured their survival. While in the mountain, they amassed sufficient livestock and descended to the plains to join the pastoral Pokot.⁷⁸ However, this did not only increase pressure on land, water, and pasture in the plains but also interfered with the agriculturist life around Turkwel region. It is in this similar ecology to that of Turkana that the Pokot developed a cultural attachment to cattle. Notably, the drought did not only influence the Pokot to adopt pastoralism as a way of life which in return brought them into contact with the Turkana but also marriages to people like the Samburu, Nandi, Rudolf, Karamoja, and Moiven that made them evolve.⁷⁹

2.3 The Pokot and Turkana people during the colonial and post-colonial rule.

The colonial rule over the Turkana and Pokot interrupted the cordial relationship the two enjoyed with free access to grazing land in each other's territory. The British incursion, classified their area as a frontier or pastoral zone and out of bound. Their limited movement and restriction to access the international borders drastically changed their relations. Also, the creation of a no-man's land denied them their traditional access to water and pasture resources in either side of the Turkwel River during the drought period.

Therefore, one needed a permit to get in and out of Turkana which limited interaction to other parts of the country. Those who violated the restriction were fined twenty percent of their total livestock for trespass.⁸⁰ In addition, the disarmament of the Turkana by the British made them vulnerable to raids from their neighbours especially the Pokot.

However, despite the raids by the Pokot on Turkana and British siding and protecting them, the two communities still cooperated in many ways. For example, the Pokot elders⁸¹ continued to serve as a mediator whenever the Turkana conflicted with the Karamojong.⁸² Additionally, they practiced intermarriage, agricultural activities and settled in peace along the Turkwel River and also borrowed socio-economic activities such as circumcision from their Pokot neighbours.⁸³

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Lamphear (1992), p.96.

⁸¹ Odegi (1990), p. 45.

⁸² Lamphear, J. (1979). 'Aspects of Turkana Leadership during the Era of Primary Resistance.' *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge University Press .Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 225-243.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

The coming of intruders along with firearms in the region introduced a new dynamic. They destabilized the power balance which the Turkana people had dominated for long. The intruders attacked the Turkana and later claimed was for self defense. For instance, Coutlis, a Greek explorer, despite being caught in the act of raiding and attacks on The Turkana claimed to his friend Powell Cotton that the natives had attacked him and he was on a mission to revenge. Similarly, Bwana Simba killed more than 15 Karamojong and claimed the raiding and looting he did was by the invite of the Turkana for a pay.⁸⁴ Bwana Tembo, a Greek adventure, on the other hand, subjected the African porters to kicks, whipping and abuses without pay and reduced them to the status of slaves. Additionally, County Samuel Teleki and von Hohnel not only referred to the Turkana as monkeys and dogs but also boasted of killing 300 of them when they attacked their settlement along the Turkwel River,⁸⁵ which made them distrustful of strangers.

Despite an increase of strangers who penetrated the interior of Turkana territory as explorers and hunters and later on clashed with their host communities,⁸⁶ and jeopardized their relations, some of the early visitors to the region established a good relationship with the host community. For example, M.S Wellby did not only trade but also moved around with them. However, the events did not deter the Turkana people to repel against strangers until the then Ugandan commissioner; Sir Harry Jonson ordered the construction of a post at Kolowa in the Pokot territory south of Turkana land which was soon attacked by Endo people and forty three of its garrison killed. The post was moved to Baringo while Turkana community held responsible in justification of their bad reputation and the only people who can attack the post.⁸⁷

The Turkana people did not differentiate between the colonial intruders, hunters, and traders because they all represented forces of pillage which they defended against. Therefore, the Turkana in many occasions staged confrontations against the expedition of Bottego, Henry, Cavendish or H.H Austin who with their negative attitudes towards them raided them for livestock.⁸⁸ However, as pressure increased on them, Ebei a Turkana foreseer, threatened the colonialists of consequences and attacks on Baringo *boma* to protect their livestock. To counter the threat, however, Austin concluded that the only language the natives could understand was

⁸⁴ Odegi (1990), p. 46.

⁸⁵ Lamphear (1979), p. 230.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Odegi (1990), p. 48.

that of gun-fire and on his way to Turkana from Baringo he actualized by first appointing chiefs like Aijigwa, Lowalel, and Loebwen⁸⁹ who appeared to him favourable. Similarly, he introduced a system of taxation payable in livestock. For his authority to be felt, on his way back, he forced each Turkana to pay tax according to the number of animals they had which to them it was purely raiding.

The act was to protect the Pokot who had submitted to imperial lordship and made the Turkana believe the British were their major enemy. This was actualized by the punishments whenever they raided the Pokot and as a result, suffered heavy casualties in that particular period. For example, in 1910, the Pokot people reported raids by Turkana at Turkwel River lead by Loebwen to the British soldiers, and in response, they were robbed off 16,631 heads of cattle.⁹⁰

Claims by the Ethiopian administration led by Menelik over Turkana land up to the Turkwel River and Karamoja areas would later play a role in Turkwel dynamics as explained in the next chapter. The Turkana and Ethiopian leaders had historical ties which encouraged the Merille, Donyiro and the Turkana to live together in peace and share intelligence reports in case of British soldiers' patrols. The ties facilitated the Ethiopians to barter guns in exchange of ivory from the Turkana at Kibish River in the north hub. The Turkana used the same to raid their neighbours.⁹¹

The acquisition of guns by the Turkana spread fear to the white settlers in Trans Nzoia because their attacks to the Pokot put pressure on their region. As a response, the colonial administration increased the number of chiefs to manage Turkana movement. The chiefs seized the first opportunity to get enough wealth. They used the accumulated wealth to take their children to school and diversified their economic activities. They became shop owners in the upcoming markets and even settled their families and only moved to the villages once to look at their animals and extend family. They took advantage of their fellow natives who could not raise tax and took their animals and amassed enough wealth that the only options remaining were fishing and crop farming along Turkwel River. They, however, also bought goods from the trading centers while also increasing the number of cheap stocks from their fellow Turkana people who were unable to raise the tax.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Oba (1992), p.6.

This resulted in a class of wealth pastoralist among the Turkana by the end of the colonial period which is witnessed up to date. The group was and now is able to access newer services like insurance services. They are able to buy other animals in case of drought, unlike the majority who cannot replace their animals and forced to move into agriculture as the only available resolution. Others opted to be hired as herders responsible for the best grazing zones along the Turkwel River. The inequality among the Turkana could later increase even more after independence.

The developments led to the movement of the Turkana people outside their territory to other parts of the country. For instance, the 1979 census indicated over 12,000 Turkana people living in Trans Nzoia mostly around Kitale District and worked in small hotels, building sites, coffee farms and as watchmen in respective towns.⁹² Accordingly, in early 1980 due to widespread destitution and deliberate concentration of the population to villages, relief camps, trading centers and irrigation schemes they forced to stay a few kilometers away from their neighbours unlike before the shift.⁹³ As of 1982, only half of the Turkana land was being utilized with 46 percent of the population living within 5km and in permanent settlements along the river, mainly along Turkwel River.⁹⁴ The explosion of government jobs in Turkana district was not a blessing to the majority of the locals as they were taken by people from down-country with a few of the educated and wealthy Turkana community getting the employment.

Similarly, the Pokot moved in large numbers from agricultural to pastoralism along the Turkwel River with increased mobility. They saw pastoralism as profitable compared to agriculture. Secondly, they were forced into pastoralism by the drought that hit the region with other social and economic factors. To survive, therefore, they combined cattle keeping with small scale husbandry of sorghum and millet. However, the Pokot joined pastoralism in large numbers which reduced their movements and increased pressure over pasture and water along Turkwel River. The only source of water in the region that was resilient all through the seasons.

Initially, their mobility was encouraged by two factors. The Pokot and Turkana had the mechanism to cope with the varying rainfall and foliage distribution. They could move in a certain direction during specific periods in search for water and grazing land. It should be noted,

⁹² Hogg (1986), p. 324.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

however, those that were assured of a continued supply of water and grazing land did not move far especially at Turkwel region. Secondly, they moved to escape from the severe drought.⁹⁵ In the dry period, the Pokot began to herd at their traditional home, then towards the Turkana and lastly to the Samburu territory. If there was prolonged drought, they grazed in the shared border with the Turkana people for a long time and vice versa.⁹⁶ This is the same land they later fought over during the rain period and its strategic purposes.

Consequently, the practice to link resources to clan and ethnicity was lost. Although there was blurred ethnic boundary; it only served for peace and cooperation among the Pokot and Turkana neighbours. They had mechanisms that allowed both communities to graze on either side. This encouraged more integration between the Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, Karamojong, Sebei, and Rendille over the shared water and pasture.

Despite their cooperation, the expulsion of Turkana from Baringo District by the colonial authorities and their land allotted to the Pokot with uncontested land rights heightened the animosity between the two communities.⁹⁷ The act contradicted their traditional practices of grazing on both sides. The Turkana lost a lot of her herd either from hunger or raids executed by the Pokot aided by the colonialist. In response and the purposes of restocking, the Turkana were forced to step up raids on the Pokot herd. However, this was later on conditioned by short-time negotiation on resource use and violent conflict with their neighbouring communities which went on until 1920 and 1930 when the British demarcated boundaries and each ethnic group,⁹⁸ had exclusive use of her territory that was easy to manage.

The early 1960s, witnessed more sophisticated raiding patterns linked to the easy access of guns and increased deaths between the Pokot and Turkana communities. In response, a large number moved to areas deemed safe mainly near the police station, irrigation schemes, market centers, and agricultural farms. Large tracks of land were left unused and instead the perceived

⁹⁵ Oba, G. & Lusigi W, J. (1987). 'An overview of drought strategies and land use in African pastoral systems.' *Kenya arid land research station, Marsabit*. p. 6.

⁹⁶ Opio, E .O F. Et al (2012). 'Resource based conflict in drought prone north western Kenya: The drivers and mitigation mechanisms.' *Wudpecker Journal of Agricultural Research* Vol. 1(11), pp. 442 – 453.

⁹⁷ Bollig, M., & Österle, M. (2008). 'Changing communal land tenure in an East African pastoral system: Institutions and Socio-Economic transformations among the Pokot of NW Kenya.' *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, pp. 301-322.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

safe places were overused. To restock, they were forced to acquire the easy accessible small arms especially from 1979 onwards.

In 1979, Idi Amin regime in Uganda was toppled. The Moroto barracks in Upe Uganda home of Amin, populated with the Lango and Karamoja who also related to the Pokot and Turkana respectively, equipped their locals with guns. Due region's proximity to both the Pokot and Turkana counties and the porous borders, simplified the acquisition of weapons (AK47) and heightened conflict between the two communities.⁹⁹ The arms made the conflict over water, grazing, and cattle along Turkwel River so intense with more casualties compared to the traditional controlled "sport" raiding among the communities that were there before. The consequence was, by early 1980s pastoral activities had declined among the Pokot and Turkana people while the human population had increased. The current raiding also capitalized on the commercial aspect of a ready market in Nairobi and other towns. As a result, the state was prompted to increase government projects at the local level like Turkwel dam irrigation scheme which this study focuses on as a whole.

2.4 Famine and decreased mobility among the Turkana and Pokot People

The Turkana and Pokot in many occasions experienced famine in a large magnitude. The 1907-1908 natural calamities had a drastic impact on the lives of Turkana people. The two were hit by rinderpest outbreak that almost wiped all their livestock. This was followed with a long drought which led to the loss of pasture and herds that rinderpest had spared. The calamities forced both the Pokot and Turkana, though on a smaller scale and for the purposes to supplement and sustain their life to adopt fishing and farming along Turkwel River. To make matters worse, between 1910- 11 rinderpest and unidentified disease returned and wiped out their livestock they had rebuilt including those of their neighbours the Karamojong.¹⁰⁰

The predicament is understood to have resulted from both internal and external factors. The Turkana and Pokot people experienced annual deviations from ideal rainfall and grazing distribution. Similarly, the presence of diseases and encroachment by hostile neighbours further complicated their livelihood strategies.¹⁰¹ For instance, before the 1979 drought, each family

⁹⁹ De Vries, K. (2012). 'Identity strategies of the Western Pokot: exploring the meaning of livestock raiding.' In *Spaces of insecurity: Human agency in violent conflicts in Kenya* .African Studies Centre Leiden. pp. 88-119.

¹⁰⁰ Odegi (1990), p. 48.

¹⁰¹ Lamphear (1992), p.13.

had an average of 2 camels, 30 cattle, two donkeys and 80 goats, and sheep.¹⁰² However, the drought had a devastating impact of causing a disease which killed children and wiped almost their entire animals and left a huge trauma to the affected. The catastrophe forced them to move towards Turkwel River in large numbers for sustenance.

The culmination was the 1960-61 droughts that hit the Turkana most and 11, 000 Turkana people moved into famine camps.¹⁰³ After that, during the 1979-80 droughts, they lost 90 per cent of their cattle, 80 percent of their sheep and goats, 40 percent of their camels and 80,000 Turkana which was half their population were in the relief camps.¹⁰⁴ To restore their livestock, they stepped up raids on Pokot neighbours along Turkwel River while some returned out of Turkana land and went into conflict with the Samburu over the rich pastures of Elberta plains.¹⁰⁵

Luckily, the government responded by distributing relief and after that establishing a fisheries industry at Lake Turkana, and irrigation schemes along Turkwel and Kerio rivers with intent to settle the destitute pastoralists.¹⁰⁶ Turkana and Pokot people embraced the initiative and moved in large numbers to work in those irrigation farms along Turkwel River as gave them hope. However, it encouraged a massive shift from pastoralism to other activities. The Turkana, for example, moved in large numbers to look for work outside their homes, some in the relief camps, and some as illicit brewers and charcoal burners in local towns. The shift also stimulated the wide spread of banditry witnessed in the region.¹⁰⁷

Kenya's independence also had its own different impacts to pastoral groups. The independent governments drastically led to reduced risks sharing among pastoral communities. For example, the response of the government in the 1970s, after a heavy drought¹⁰⁸ that hit all over Turkana and Pokot were to supply relief food to the affected and in specific spots but not necessarily needy groups. Those spots turned out to become small towns and gradually

¹⁰² Odegi (1990), p.106.

¹⁰³ Hogg (1986), p.322.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Odegi (1990), p.49.

¹⁰⁶ Hogg (1986), p.322.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Huysentruyt M. et al (2009). 'Understanding Declining Mobility and Inter-Household Transfers among East African Pastoralists.' Published by: Wiley on behalf of The London School of Economics and Political Science and The Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines. *Economical*, New Series, Vol. 76, No. 302. pp. 315-336.

expanded. Many of the communities preferred relief centers due to the access for essential services like medication, education and cleaned piped water. However, not all got equal services and shares. Some government officers, famine relief administrators, councilors, teachers and cooperative officials were alleged to be the highest beneficiaries of the relief proceeds. The communities were forced to venture into illegal brewing of local brews as relief services had encouraged the population to move from the village to camps in large numbers.

Historically, relief food was viewed as a state policy where disasters such as drought and famine are mostly created as a means to discourage nomadism.¹⁰⁹ The policy makers and famine relief experts view the pastoral economy as impossible to sustain the people all through and therefore encouraged the Pokot and Turkana into relief camps without taking into consideration their future life. This, in the end, cultivates a dependency attitude where they are always sure of government intervention in the event of drought and famine which encouraged idleness among youths with careless alcohol consumption, early sex, and raiding and road banditry.

The colonial regime thus contributed largely to the famine that hit the Pokot and Turkana people. Through the imposed hut tax, confiscation of their animals and finally the creation of the northern frontier denied them free movement, made the Turkana and Pokot poor and unable to sustain themselves. The act left them so vulnerable that ministry of agriculture in the early 1980s came up with the idea to build a multipurpose dam along the Turkwel River to mitigate the suffering of Turkana and Pokot people. The Turkwel Dam was to produce electricity, fishing and irrigating farms for the production of cash and food crops that was completed in the year 1991.

The Pokot and Turkana were also forced by the environment to revisit their traditional ties and those of their neighbours. Trade, for example, was encouraged as coping mechanism. For instance, the Turkana people relationship with the Merille helped them settle easily in each other's territory in times of disasters especially drought. During the 1980s mass emigration of the famished nomads the Turkana settled temporarily in the Merille land where they took

¹⁰⁹ Odegi (1990), p.101.

advantage of the better food airlifted to those areas by the Ethiopian government twice in a week.¹¹⁰

Traditionally, after every drought, Pokot and Turkana joined among themselves and pooled together their livestock which they handed over to a few men or families as the rest went back to the camps. Similarly, they restocked through the payment of bride wealth and good will from relatives and friends. Through this, there was encouraged risk sharing among the communities, also referred to as social insurance with an aim to cope with the environment of the day.¹¹¹ It was a mechanism to protect themselves from the shame of having a poor person among them qualify of being a full member of a group and have rights to use grazing land and have rights to decide on how to use land and help protect the herds while moving.

The main argument, therefore, is that pastoral communities cooperated the most in the dry season and conflicted during the wet season.¹¹² They moved to places with water and pasture during the drought and famine period with a purpose to ease pressure on resources. They also divided their families; send their children to kinsmen, friends and school to slow off the population. Therefore, as a coping mechanism in a tough situation, some of the family members of the Pokot and Turkana migrated to the market, rural centers, lakeshores, along river banks and down- country. Due to their status, most embraced brewing local brew called *chang'aa* for their livelihood survival. Their link between poverty and conflict was possible, they had depended on the natural environment for their survival which provided a higher ground for conflict as their produces were mainly not for the market purposes but rather self-sufficient.

As a result, increased cattle raiding and conflict among pastoral communities¹¹³ over pasture, water, and livestock ownership catapulted especially with the easy availability of cheap automatic guns. The outcome was the incapability of government machinery to manage this kind of conflict either because it was overpowered or from the onset due to its policies that have little interest in the entire region. The government over concentrated its energies in small towns and communities while in other areas were left to give protection by themselves.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Huysentruyt M. et al (2009), p. 318.

¹¹² Adano, W., Dietz, T., Witsenburg, K., & Zaal, F. (2012). 'Climate change, violent conflict and local institutions in Kenya's drylands.' *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(1), 65-80. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23141280> on 5th March, 2018.

¹¹³ Huysentruyt et al (2009), p.319.

The relief camps deteriorated mobility activities. Therefore, huge chunks of land were lost to other activities such as expansion of towns; cultivation of rain fed crops, parks, protected areas, violently contested areas¹¹⁴ and the overall increased pressure on land resources. Although towns such as Turkwel which were viewed as safe and free of conflict, later witnessed contention due to over population pressure unlike before. Many in those towns abandoned their traditional way of life. The economic shift was a blow to them as they lost their economic backbone which they depended on.

The culmination of reduced mobility to the Pokot and Turkana came with the introduction of Turkwel dam. Many moved around Turkwel and permanently settled, worked as shopkeepers, farmers, watchmen, while others got formal employment in Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA). This was influenced by the constant availability of water and pasture, others became settled agriculturist and keepers of cattle for substitution. This changed the dynamic of the conflict that was witnessed before between the Pokot and Turkana people around Turkwel.

2.5 Conclusion

The chapter highlighted the historical relations between the Pokot and Turkana up to 1984, before the construction of THD, and which was a major investment in Turkwel Region. The Pokot and Turkana had symbiotic relations and traded in goods and services. Some of the goods they exchanged were ghee, skin, iron, ivory, tobacco and cattle. The two also exchanged cultural practices like *sapana* dance which the Pokot borrowed from the Turkana performed in two occasions that is before the raids and after, circumcision which was borrowed by the Turkana from the Pokot and shared grazing and watering points. The Pokot also learnt from Turkana the application of red ore during various events.

The two were also involved in cattle rustling. However, the activity was treated as a ‘sport’ regulated by elders. The raiding was only done in a specific period of time when all the communities had enough pasture, water and healthy animals. This is the time the animals could run first and for a longer period. They used the raids mainly for purpose of bride price payment. The similarities in socio economic activities of the two communities made the first visitors like Harry Johnson to describe them as one people.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

However, their relationship gradually changed overtime due to the interplay between natural and manmade catastrophes. Initially, the two moved without restrictions, however, the British administration introduced the Northern Frontier Zone that limited their movements. This was followed by the killing of locals, levying them and even raiding their cattle as a punishment. As their socio-economic was affected, the region was hit by drought, famine, rinderpest and other unknown diseases that almost wiped them and their animals.

The calamities forced the Pokot and Turkana into rescue camps and made them dependant on relief food as early in 1930s and more severe in 1979 and 1980s. Consequently the Kenyan government through the ministry of agriculture responded and proposed a multipurpose dam along the Turkwel River at Turkwel gorge. The aim was to make Pokot and Turkana food sufficient and manage their perennial conflicts. After various feasibility studies that ran from late 1970s to early 1980s, the constriction began in 1984. It is therefore interesting to examine the immediate dynamics of THD to the Pokot and Turkana in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
A CURSE AND BLESSING: TURKWEL DAM AND POKOT-TURKANA
RELATIONS, 1984-1991

3.1 Introduction

The initial impact of the Turkwel dam on the Pokot and Turkana was a mixture of a curse and blessing. Following the feasibility study for the project, about 800 families were displaced. However, the dam construction immediately came with job opportunity of manual labour for both communities. These benefits, however, were almost cancelled when the Turkwel dried up downstream as a result of the dam. This chapter looks at the interesting binary of the Turkwel dam being an asset and a liability to the locals in its initial years. It examines the opportunities the dam created, induced people displacement and the ecological disaster of downstream dry river beds because of the river.

3.2 Construction of Turkwel dam and the dry river bed

Since independence, the successive Kenyan governments worked for ways into which they can open up the arid and semi-arid to be food secure and stable. The region compared to other parts of the country had more land with little or no agricultural activities, surging population, increased poverty and high unemployment rate. The government realised the initiative siphoned a lot from the budget, and thus rooted for the creation of an irrigation body, the National Irrigation Board (NIB) under an act of Parliament in 1966.¹¹⁵ The agenda was to develop, control, improve national irrigation schemes, rehabilitate land, improves water resources in arid and semi-arid regions, embraces development and ultimately transforms the region. NIB carried out several feasibility studies and identified suitable sites to sustain irrigation projects and conserve land. Initially, NIB's mandate was limited to the improvement of the welfare of the pastoralist population and their livestock.

Accordingly, in 1979-1983 NIB shifted her plans to include mixed crop and animal farming.¹¹⁶ In August 1979s, through an act of parliament, Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA) was established and inaugurated in June 1981.¹¹⁷ Its main focus was on Turkana, Pokot,

¹¹⁵ Ng'weno, H. (1986, January 2). 'Focus on irrigation. Have Kenya's Irrigation Schemes Gone to Seed.' *Weekly review*. Ltd Agip house Nairobi. p. 2.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Ng'weno, H. (Ed). (1986, January 2). 'Focus on irrigation. Turkwel: Looking to Future Power Supply.' *Weekly review*. Ltd Agip house Nairobi. p. 9.

Marakwet and Baringo areas regarded as the most neglected regions. Consequently, through KVDA, the government embarked on the construction of a multipurpose Turkwel dam financed by the French government, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), who together conceived the plan to construct it along the Turkwel River.¹¹⁸ The Norwegian consulting firm NORCONSULT together with Preece, Cadrew, and Rider (PCR) from the United Kingdom¹¹⁹ were the principal advisors on the multi-purpose development dam after carrying out feasibility studies until 1984.¹²⁰ After that, a French company, SPIE Batignolles was awarded the contract to build the dam in 1984.

However, the entire project was termed a failure by the Pokot and Turkana people. They complained that since its completion in 1991, the entire 106 megawatts (MW) produced was channelled to the national grid at Lessos sub-station through a 220 kV transmission line over a distance of 230 km away from the source,¹²¹ while only two percent of Turkana¹²² and three percent of west Pokot residents were connected to electricity.¹²³ The 30,000 hectares of land in Lorogon and Nakwomoru which was to be under mechanised agriculture for the region to be food sufficient and at the same time act as a buffer zone between the Turkana and Pokot, never took off for over thirty years and instead turned into a fighting field.¹²⁴

The Pokot and Turkana also complained of silt and consequently little water in the downstream. This was due to the interference of water flow after the construction of the dam which dried up the floodplain. Traditionally, the flow of Turkwel River determined the distribution patterns of channels, back-swamps, marshes and tributaries which made up the floodplain essential for agriculture.¹²⁵ Similarly, the deposit of fertile alluvial soil with which the continued flow of the Turkwel River supported during the drier season, was taken away and human livelihood of the Turkana and Pokot affected badly regarding agriculture. As a result, food insecurity was

¹¹⁸ Kenya National Assembly Official Record, (1993). 'Ministerial Statement Regarding Turkwel Gorge.' p1425

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Macgoye, O.M. (Ed), (1983). *Stima An informal history of EAP&L*. The East African Power and lighting Company Limited. p .393.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Ngugi, E. et al (2013). 'Exploring Kenya's Inequality: Pulling Apart or Pooling Together? Turkana County.' Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. p. 10.

¹²³ Ngugi, E. et al (2013). 'Exploring Kenya's Inequality: Pulling Apart or Pooling Together? West Pokot County.' Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. p.14.

¹²⁴ Bii, B. (2011, September 18). 'Ministry in fresh drive to revive stalled irrigation projects.' *Sunday Nation*

¹²⁵ Kingsford, R. T. (2000). 'Ecological impacts of dams, water diversions and river management on floodplain wetlands in Australia.' *Austral Ecology*, 25(2), 109-127.p .110.

witnessed especially for those who cultivated millet that would have survived on moisture found in the downstream during the dry period. Although the initial idea was to allow the dam to fill with a short term impact, the problem persisted becoming a permanent challenge. Those in the downstream, therefore, were forced to move to nearer villages to the firm like Kasei and Lorogon to access water for domestic use as well as for their animals.

Their alternative economic activities like fishing in the downstream were also disrupted. Initially, fishing supplemented their diet and also a medium of exchange between the Turkana and Pokot. However, in the construction period of the Turkwel dam, the activity was interrupted at large. The activity that was out carried throughout the rain and dry period was interfered with.¹²⁶ The *ng'ikebotok* (the agriculturist Turkana who stayed along Turkwel river and practicing fishing as a supplement activity) were the most affected as large part of their land was curved away for the dam to be built on.

The region being arid, the interruption of the water flow gave room for foreign plants to grow in the Turkwel River bed. This was due to the fact that the river did not have other feeder rivers in the downstream. Consequently, water quality and quantity was compromised all the way to Turkana town as observed at Lodwar Bridge many miles away from the Turkwel. People in Kanamkamer estate in Lodwar town recount the impacts of the Turkwel dam constructed several kilometers away in the upstream. To them, the dam was a curse for their diminishing, traditional and respectable tree the *mukoma*, which grew along the river. They fed on its fruits during the drier seasons and also made brooms, mats, and baskets from its leaves.

It is clear evidence, therefore, the Pokot and Turkana people were physically and psychologically affected by the construction of the Turkwel dam. The dam affected their economic, social power and heightened feel of marginalization which disrupted them. They lost confidence in society, themselves and the justice system for they were unable to provide basic needs like food and water for their families due to the changed flood patterns that threatened their fauna habitats. More devastating to them was the decreased grazing land and flood plain that drastically impacted on pasture and hence their animals. It is justifiable

¹²⁶ Oral interview with Ekai at Sorgha camp, Turkwel on 6th May 2017

therefore to note then that; war did not mean to kill a person with a weapon rather the cutting down of the trees or killing of culture by submerging it in a dam and destroying their history.¹²⁷

3.3 Jobs at Turkwel dam

Some scholars argue that dams are mostly constructed in areas where the populations have less key skills involved.¹²⁸ Evidently, during the construction of Turkwel dam, there was the employment of a large number of un-skilled and smaller but significant amounts of skilled people. Many of the unskilled were Pokot and Turkana while skilled were foreigners.¹²⁹ Due to the alienation they experienced over time, majority of Pokot and Turkana, lacked skills, were poor, and unable to afford protection gears. Therefore, during the construction, estimate 12 of them died while 50 were injured as a result of working at the dam site.¹³⁰

Most of the job earnings did not even sustain them and their families. They were majorly cooks, mixers of concrete, loaders and drivers, which did not fetch enough money to sustain a family for an off day. In essence, many believed the manual jobs did not improve their monetary status or their security in any way and thus opted for slums like Lorogon as it offered a cheap alternative to the daily commuting. However, it never took long before the slum turned out to become a problem both to the locals and the national government. Challenges of heightened insecurity, sexually transmitted diseases and socio-cultural disruptions heightened an already very difficult economic situation.

At its completion in 1991, Turkwel dam only offered a few jobs typically in skilled technical sectors and rarely for the local communities. A few Pokot and Turkana people were employed as cleaners and watchmen while the white collar under KVDA and KenGen which runs the day to day activities of the dam were dominated by the outsiders. Similarly, the fishing and farming programs that were to benefit the locals never picked up. The few that took the job passionately

¹²⁷Ronayne, M. (2005). 'The cultural and environmental impact of large dams in southeast Turkey.' National University of Ireland, *Galway and Kurdish Human Rights Project*.p.37.

¹²⁸ Adams, W. M., Brody, H., Adams, A., Ferradás, C. A., Mehta, L., & Srinivasan, B. (1999). *Social Impacts on Large Dams: Equity and Distributional Issues*. World Commission on Dams. p.29.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*.

¹³⁰ Hawley, S. (2003). 'Turning a Blind Eye: Corruption and the UK Export Credits Guarantee Department.' Corner House.p.30.

like in Riting'i village did not know where to take the fish for selling.¹³¹ They also lacked storage and preservation facilities despite electricity being generated around.

Worse still non-resident took advantage of the resource and developed business network in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Luhya, Luo and even Ugandans from Mbale were 'controlling' the fish business at Riting'i. This was despite the fact that the region was termed as insecure; I had a case of a Ugandan who found it strategic to act as a link to the Congolese fish market which was so lucrative. Together with other brokers, they determined the price of fish and where to be supplied. While a huge fish fetched a maximum of one hundred and fifty Kenyan shillings at Turkwel, the same fish sold at wholesale in either Kitale or any other place in the country was nine hundred shillings.¹³² Generally, it was a good idea to raise the standards of live; instead, it heightened insecurity in Turkwel.¹³³

In relation to the challenges emanating from the dam such as diseases and famine, several organizations stepped in. For example, the Kenya Red Cross (KRC) offered counseling sessions to the locals especially those in fish business at Riting'i. They organized meetings with locals to discourage sex for fish activities which were so rampant in the initial period.¹³⁴ However, this achieved little especially to the majority single businesswomen at Riting'i with families to support and vulnerable to some of the staff from KenGen, KVDA, GSU officers guarding both the Turkwel lodge adjacent to Riting'i market and Turkwel firm and tourists.

Turkwel region experienced a low school turnout. This was especially during the construction period where school attendance drastically dropped. This was even due to the fact that schools were constructed and supported by the Turkwel dam project. For instance, Lorogon primary and secondary, Riting'i primary school and Turkwel gorge primary and secondary were financed by Turkwel project. Some argued that the high school dropout rate was due to the availability of manual jobs during the construction period that led to the situation. However, teachers at these particular schools are non-residents apart from Lorogon which has got a few Turkana teachers. The assumption is by a Pokot being employed in Lorogon primary which is on the Turkana territory will symbolize Turkwel Dam belonging to them and vice versa.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Oral interview with Siwa at Sorghea camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

¹³² Oral interview with the Fish dealer at Riting'i Turkwel on 7th May 2017.

¹³³ Oral interview with *Mama* Samuel at Riting'i Turkwel on 7th May 2017.

¹³⁴ Oral interview with Red Cross official at Riting'i Turkwel on 7th May 2017

¹³⁵ Oral Interview with Ekai, teacher at Lorogon secondary on 5th May 2017.

Similarly, students from the two communities did not mix. Turkwel Gorge primary and secondary was purely for Pokot while Lorogon for Turkana students. This emanated from the conflict, and high tensions witnessed between the two communities over the project. Therefore, the outsiders like the Kisii, Luhya, Luo and Nandi students benefited from the boarding facilities offered by Turkwel while the host did not.¹³⁶ The situation made one wonder why the students from the two communities did not mix and if the ministry of education was in the know how. The word was that traditions and culture from both the Pokot and Turkana played a key role. Few that went to school were seen to be weak while those who grazed were respected and treated as heroes. More fascinating was the role of women in these two communities. Male students did not imagine being taught by female teachers. However, it was that, if such issues were addressed, then the two communities should have a good number of students enrolled in schools around and changed their perspective.

The situation was worse in the health sector. Lorogon and Sorghea dispensaries are only slated for emergencies and referral purposes to either Ortum mission hospital, Kapenguria or Kitale. This was despite the region being high of water related diseases like typhoid and malaria due to stagnant water in the downstream. Locals argued that immediately the dam was completed, drugs in those hospitals ran out. They relate the challenge of the dispensaries lacking medicine to the traditional alienation they experienced over years and that the reason they were equipped during the construction was due to the fact they targeted the skilled labourers who were foreigners.

There were also difficulties in reaching those hospitals. The region has sorry state of the roads and prone to attacks. So those who were attacked found a challenge to seek treatment. Those who wanted treatment from areas like Riting'i which was hilly and far had to walk and risk attacks from both wild animals from Nasolot national park and Turkana warriors to get to the facility at Sorghea camp.

¹³⁶ Oral interview with Mary, teacher at Turkwel gorge primary on 5th May 2017.

Statistics indicated that in Pokot County, there were approximately 6,100 people per health facility compared to the national average of 11,300.¹³⁷ This is despite the fact that the region is vast and people lived beyond 6.4 km radius of the health facility. Together with the changed ecology after the introduction of Turkwel dam, there were many new health concerns in the region which needed fully equipped dispensaries and more so campaigns. For instance the health statistics of 1993/1994, associated with morbidity at all health centers in Pokot and Turkana, malaria accounted for 25-79 percent of the cases. Such statistics generally undermined the economic development of the Turkana and Pokot region.

During the construction period Turkwel dam, gonorrhoea had accounted for up to nine percent of all cases treated in Turkwel.¹³⁸ This was due to the progressive urbanization and modernization among the Turkana and Pokot brought by the Turkwel dam. This she alleged was due to the conflict of culture and modernity where traditions spread fear for people to visit the hospital and seek either protection or medication. Besides, it would appear that the majority of those who left back their partners became vulnerable to prostitution.

Despite the challenges posit by various diseases, tension among medical at Turkwel was also witnessed. They were trained to serve all without discrimination;¹³⁹ however, a Turkana nurse cannot work on the Turkwel side and vice versa. The locals linked the challenges to the Turkwel management which to them it did not address their issues in equality. For instance, Lorogon dispensary in Turkana side was not connected with electricity for over thirty years. They were only connected in 2014 when the president planned to visit and launch the free laptop for lower classes at Lorogon primary. However, it was disconnected immediately the president cancelled off the trip to the region. The problem that was likely to happen if the president launched the project from Lorogon was a sign then to confirm that Turkwel belonged to the Turkana by virtue of Lorogon being in Turkana county.

¹³⁷ Ranshaw, M., Birley M.H., Sang D.K., & Silver.J .B. (1998). ‘A rapid health impact assessment of the Turkwel Gorge hydroelectric dam and proposed irrigation project. Impact Assessment and project Appraisal.’ Beech Tree publishing, vol 16 no. 3. pp.215-226.

¹³⁸ Interview with a Nurse at Lorogon dispensary on 7 May 2017

¹³⁹ Oral interview with a nurse at Lorogon dispensary, Turkwel on 7th May 2017.

3.4 Development-induced displacement

There is an average of two million people a year who are forced to move because of dams worldwide.¹⁴⁰ However, a majority resisted the displacement due to the heavy costs of the social and economic burden associated with the action.¹⁴¹ Even though in most cases dams were necessary and beneficial development to the country, it was a crisis-prone of the socioeconomic and cultural disruption that directly affected the population. The Turkwel dam dislocated and broke up the living patterns and social continuity of the Turkana and Pokot people by completely dismantling their existing modes of production; social networks, causing the impoverishment of many of the uprooted, threatened their cultural identity and increased the risks of epidemics and health problems to them.¹⁴² Despite such impact that emanated from the macro development, there was no clear way of human resettlement of the affected families. This leaves a question: for whose benefit was the Turkwel dam built?

Many scholars associated Kenya's Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with electoral related conflict, border and land disputes, cattle rustling and banditry, urban disturbances, the proliferation of small arms and official eviction from forestland and water catchment area.¹⁴³ However, electoral conflict is to some extent predictable and controlled. The onset of multiparty politics in the 1990s for example heightened and created a lot of IDPs among Kenyan communities.¹⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that that multiparty happened the same time with the inauguration of Turkwel dam 1991 and added a new dynamic to the existing and predictable conflict between the Pokot and Turkana people that resulted in IDPs. However, little has been done on development induced displacement that accompanied the construction of the Turkwel dam. Therefore, this section of this chapter attempts to examine the kind of displacement that occurred on the Turkana and Pokot population at Turkwel during its construction.

¹⁴⁰Adams, W. M., Brody, H., Adams, A., Ferradás, C. A., Mehta, L., & Srinivasan, B. (1999). *Social Impacts on Large Dams: Equity and Distributional Issues*.p.30.

¹⁴¹Jackson, S., & Sleigh, A. (2000). Resettlement for China's Three Gorges Dam: socio-economic impact and institutional tensions. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33(2), pp.223-241.

¹⁴²Robinson, W. C., (2003). 'Risks and Rights: The Causes, Consequences, and Challenges of Development-Induced Displacement.' The Brookings Institution –SAIS. p.10.

¹⁴³Norwegian Refugee Council (2003). 'Profile of Internal Displacement: Kenya.' Compilation of the information available in the global IDP database of the *Norwegian Refugee Council*.p.9.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*

Although the dam was a transformational investment to the society, it ended up destroying many Pokot and Turkana homes and livelihood. It displaced an estimated 800 families with little or no compensation to the affected. The emphasis and community programs put in place by the government to lessen the impact were overshadowed due to their poor design and little consideration of the communities' context. For example resettlement programmes, were involuntarily and deemed as a necessary evil or even an actual good that made them more susceptible to change.¹⁴⁵The challenges were more on women and children from the two communities due to their traditionally restricted access to legal services either due to poverty, culture or lack of information.

The situation was even complicated further by land speculation dynamic especially by the elite. With prior access to government information, those in power easily employed legal means and acquired land in their names to speculate over time. In return, the Turkana and Pokot people lost their land while a few benefited. Interestingly, the legal minds protected their interests at the shore of the dam by building Turkwel Lodge for the president. Economically, the lodge did not have any positive impact on the Pokot nor Turkana communities. Instead, they were displaced for space it is situated on with a full police station. Was the dam really for the people or personal property?

In addition, Turkana and Pokot families at Turkwel were given a short notice to move out of the land¹⁴⁶ and create space for the dam despite being the foundation of their livelihood. They did not have time to organize in advance how to counter the future challenges. In the process, they lost their grazing field, gold harvesting point, *lochoke* fruits and most importantly the traditional activities that were presided over by their elders in the region. This resulted in poverty with no assistance to re-establish after the coerced displacement which earlier they had drought and disarmament operation in 1982 which to some was done inhumane way with fears of vandalism and seizure of their livestock.

¹⁴⁵Robinson, W. C. (2003). 'Risks and rights: The causes, consequences, and challenges of development-induced displacement.' *Occasional Paper*.p.10.

¹⁴⁶ Oral interview with Ewoi at Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

The impact of resettlement lingered for long after relocation and their opportunities were more limited in reality than on paper.¹⁴⁷ Among the Pokot and Turkana women and children were culturally marginalized entities within marginalized communities by respective governments. Often, however, they shouldered the ordeal of displacement far more intensely.¹⁴⁸ The same culture dictated that women and children were responsible for domestic chores like fetching water; however, their voice in planning of the dam or compensation processes was not heard.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, responsible organs took advantage of the existing cultural and traditional structures to exploit, and those who protested against the eviction became vulnerable to conflict and forced burden poverty.

Accordingly, resettlement process of the Pokot and Turkana people deepened the inequalities and totally disrupted their social cohesion. Those displaced, especially women, lost their kinship structure because they did not see their children and married daughters. Indeed, it was hard to find out how the resettlement plan for those displaced from the Turkwel dam took place as KVDA officers at Turkwel offices turned hostile and unwilling to give any information concerning the process during my research.

The matter was complicated further by lack of land right and access to ownership. This was specifically to the widowed women with land records without compensation at all.¹⁵⁰ However, some argued that land in the Rift Valley was occupied by pastoral communities on a communal basis and did not have title deeds. Therefore due to such gaps in the application of the law, women of Turkana and Pokot community lost land, water, fuel, *mukoma* fruit tree, and honey businesses. This left them jobless and unable to educate their children like boys who opted to become *ngoroko* while young girls went for early marriages. The communities felt alienated and opted for conflicts to seek an attention.

However, their conflicts made the government to construct a perimeter wall around French and Sorgeyer camps that completely alienate the Turkwel dam from the community. The communities around depends on the schools, dispensaries, shops and GSU station. But the perimeter wall to the communities will be challenges in case of an emergency. There is the

¹⁴⁷ Adams, Brody, Adams, Ferradás, Mehta & Srinivasan, (1999), p.25.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Ronayne, M. (2005). 'The cultural and environmental impact of large dams in southeast Turkey.' National University of Ireland, *Galway and Kurdish Human Rights Project*.p.23.

¹⁵⁰ Oral interview with Siwa at Sorghea, Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

challenge of roads to reach those facilities; therefore, they were exposed to attacks. Indeed, the dam was a white elephant in the account that it did not achieve its mission 30 years down the line. The rate of underdevelopment and hopelessness among the host communities around the dam from Kainuk, Kasei, Lorogon, and Nasolot to Riting'i is alarming. Although there were a few youths who either earlier on served as *ngoroko* or ran away from being recruited, opted to serve as cooks in police stations at Kainuk, Riting'i and Turkwel for food and accommodation as payment, it was of little help.

3.5 Conclusion

The chapter has highlighted the binary impact of curse and blessing revolving around THD, which were short term effects of the macro investment to the Pokot and Turkana. The chapter covered the period under which the last feasibility study was done and the dam was constructed. After the last feasibility study, an estimated 800 families were displaced. This mainly affected women and children who were alienated both by their communities in an already discriminated against society by the state. Being in an arid place and due to culture and traditions women and children were involved in collecting of firewood and water. However, from the period of the feasibility studies until when the dam was constructed, the voice of women was not heard. Those in higher positions with prior information to government of government's projects took advantage of the culture and traditions of the Turkana and Pokot acquired their land, displaced them to speculate over a period of time.

This was followed with the construction of the dam which again had its various immediate impacts to the population. This was so when the Pokot and Turkana culture was submerged in a dam. They lost their grazing land, traditional land, economic activities like bee keeping that led to the closure of the factory and cattle market days. In the downstream, the communities experienced dry river bed. The impact was so severe that those who practiced river bank like in Kasei, Ombolion and Lorogon were forced to stop and move near Turkwel dam. The farming had initially served them as a supplement during the dry seasons.

Certainly, the dam provided jobs to the locals. They were employed as cooks, concrete mixers and drivers. However, the meager payment did not enable some who were injured at the site to seek medical attention that they succumbed to their injuries. Similarly, due to the small pay, Lorogon slum was formed. In Lorogon they were various challenges. The inhabitants were exposed to sexually transmitted diseases, silt water, malaria and poor housing

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STATE AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: CONTRADICTIONS OF THE TURKWEL DAM AND POKOT-TURKANA RELATIONS, 1991-2015.

4.1 Introduction

The Turkwel Hydroelectric Dam (THD) and its attendant developments were state's initiatives aimed at 'modernizing' and 'civilizing' the region. James Scott regards it as a tendency of taking standard grid which is centrally recorded and monitored.¹⁵¹ For example, the dam, was mainly, intended to contribute hydropower to the national grid, enable fishing and water supply for mechanized agriculture of 3000 hectares of land and other domestic use. Similarly, it was to serve as a tourist attraction and to actualize that, the dam, presidential lodge and two airstrip construction lands were hived off the Nasolot Game Park. To reinforce these developments, in 2007, Safaricom (local mobile telephony provider) telecommunication installed a booster in Turkwel at Riting'i village to boost communication in the region.

However, the THD project was beset with contradictions which undermined its set goals. This was due to the unexpected outcomes from the project and state disconnect from the local's priorities. The dam was hived off from the Nasolot National Park with an aim that as tourists visited the park they will visit the dam as well. During construction, the noise from rock blasting, contrary to the expectations, caused many species of birds, antelope and other wild animals to move away while the few elephants that remained turned out to be a menace.¹⁵² This could, finally, become a paradox of a tourist attraction which never was. The two airstrips that were expected to facilitate air transport in the region were disused and only occasionally used during the electioneering period. Similarly, since it was constructed, THD has never filled up to the expected level despite the fact that it submerged all of what the locals owned in the area.¹⁵³ The fishing activities were expected to elevate the lives of the locals, instead, it is dominated by brokers who took advantage of lack of storage facilities to exploit the Pokot and Turkana people by lowering fish prices.¹⁵⁴ Worse still, Safaricom booster never boosted the coexistence of the Turkana and Pokot people.

¹⁵¹ Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. Yale University Press.p.3.

¹⁵² Kenya National assembly Official Record, (1997). 'Pre-investment study for Turkwel dam 24 Sep 1997.'

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Research by participation observation, May 6 -7, 2017.

This chapter demonstrates how the state and its nature of hegemony refashioned Turkwel environment and Pokot-Turkana relations in the construction of THD and its attendant developments. State hegemony here, according to James Scott, appears in four main ways; the administrative orders, modernity ideology, authoritarian and lastly societies lack of capacity to resist those plans.¹⁵⁵ Basing on the four approaches by James Scott on how states operate, the chapter argues that THD a state owned project had underlying contradictions which derailed its functionality. The chapter sums them into three major dynamics. The state patronage, hydro-politics and mobile telephony as a new ‘gun’ that exacerbated the failures of THD and Safaricom telecommunication intentions after their start of operation in 1991 and 2007 to 2015.

4.2 Turkwel dam state patronage and Pokot-Turkana Relations

Through James Scott’s idea of how states exercises their hegemony, this section explains how the Kenya African National union (KANU) regime took advantage of the powers bestowed upon them to amplify state patronage over Turkwel dam which impacted greatly on the Pokot-Turkana relations. The state, through its administrative orders, modernity ideology, authoritarian nature and Pokot-Turkana lack of capacity to resist government plans, constructed THD which corruption and nepotism allegations around it became rampant. In one of the cases of corruption surrounding THD construction, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) government and international representatives of European Union were implicated in a scandal where the initial estimate was to cost ksh 4.5 billion, but ended up five times high the initial price.¹⁵⁶ This section argues that the state patronage which was experienced in the country especially under one party rule during president Moi’s tenure after the Kenya People’s Union (KPU) party was banned in 1969 and Kenya became a *de facto* one party state under KANU,¹⁵⁷ where its monopoly later on was legalised in 1982 lay ground for the hydro-politics, mobile telephony and Turkwel dam conflict that would later be experienced in the region.

Tordoff asserts that political party patronage was important in a multi-party context, because it promised its future patronage development in return for electoral support. However, Kenya’s environment was different especially when one considered the 1963 and 1992 period. In that particular time, KANU was only used as a mobilising agent for votes as opposed to

¹⁵⁵ Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing like a state*. p.5.

¹⁵⁶ Nyamai, F. (2013 Oct 2013). ‘Steeped in controversy, dam gobbled up 20 billion, five times more than the initial budget.’ *Daily Nation*. Retrieved from, www.nation.co.ke on 26th may 2017.

¹⁵⁷ Tordoff, W. (1984). *Government and Politics in Africa*. Macmillan Education. London. p.103.

development. Presidents Kenyatta and Moi with their cabinet turned purposely into administrators rather than agent of development. The two presidents became ‘Grand Patron’ and ‘Ultimate Arbiter’ who elevated their clientelism into their *mudus operandi* (fashion).¹⁵⁸ Accordingly, KANU became a channel through which national resources were tapped for personal benefit even though leaders purported to be national, only to prevent the party to exercise a locally-focused patronage function in distributing spoils to a clique of their supporters and neglect those that were seen to be opposing them.

KANU was so powerful that it monopolized its patronage. Its ‘loyal’ members were accordingly rewarded wholesomely, because it paid to belong in KANU. For example, some members accessed bank overdraft until some banks ran out of cash and went to the brink of collapsing.¹⁵⁹ Others influenced the appointment of staff across the government institution especially relatives and friends who even lacked the required qualification.¹⁶⁰ However, that did not influence all the Kenyan communities to join KANU but were automatically isolated like the Turkana community who were majorly supporting FORD Kenya in the eve of multiparty politics and even the colonial era where they were termed resistant.

Such intrigues in Kenya and other African countries prompted Bayart Jean et al. to term them as acts of criminalizing of the state. This was made a routine in politics and state. Many of the government operations happened at the very heart of political, governmental institution and circuit. The practice was criminal in nature and patent, whether defined by the law of the country in question, norms of international law, an organization of the international or so viewed by the international community and most importantly that constituted the aid donors.¹⁶¹

Basing on Bayart Jean et al. definition, state patronage was perpetrated in THD project in various ways. From the conception and construction of Turkwel dam, KANU was so influential in determining and controlling everything which happened in the country.¹⁶² For instance, Kenya had long experienced division of structures into entities with legal fiction like the Kalenjin clique which controlled power and most prominent among them Nicholas Biwott.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Bayart-F, Ellis, S. & Hibou, B. (1999). *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*. Jamesa Carrey. Oxford. p.21.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Oral interview with an elder of Lorogon on 7th May 2017.

¹⁶³ Bayart, Ellis & Hibou (1999), p.22.

Initially, in the 1970s, the most powerful politicians and influential people in the country came from Kiambu, the home of the then President Jomo Kenyatta.¹⁶⁴ The coterie organised, laid ground and legalized both corruption and its denunciation because some were considered to be super representatives who spoke for their respective ethnic groups and also channelled resources to them.¹⁶⁵

Concerning THD, Minister of energy in Moi regime, Nicholas Biwott was accused of corruption underdoing over the entire project. Despite the fact that all ministers were paid Ksh 21,033 per month, he was alleged to have hundreds of millions of dollars mainly in offshore holdings that he acquired the name total man.¹⁶⁶ He was accused to have accrued most of the monies from kickbacks during the construction of the Turkwel dam.¹⁶⁷ It was alleged that he acted as a soft landing for other ministers and influential people in the project. They colluded at a certain level with the respective company to soften the process of doing business by giving their people contracts to supply goods and services. Coincidentally, during the construction period of the Turkwel hydroelectric dam, the Kenyan foreign debt increased from \$200 million in 1986- the early years of the construction of the Turkwel dam -to \$1 billion in 1989 as the dam was nearing its completion.¹⁶⁸ This indicates how persons positioning in the party structure influenced what people got. The Turkwel dam was used by Kenya African National Union (KANU) to organize, intraparty cohesion, the attraction of voters and supporters, financing the party and its candidates, procuring favourable government action and finally creating party discipline and policy making.¹⁶⁹

The above activities characterized Kenya as a plunder economy.¹⁷⁰ Public officers through their representatives acquired economic resources for private purposes through KANU. In the party they created patron-client networks which remained fundamental state- society linkage

¹⁶⁴ Kanyinga, K. (1994). 'Ethnicity, Patronage and Class in a Local Arena: High and Low Politics in Kiambu, Kenya.' 1982-92. *The New Local Level Politics in East Africa*, p.66.

¹⁶⁵ Arriola, L. R. (2009). 'Patronage and political stability in Africa.' *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(10), pp1339-1362.

¹⁶⁶ Perlez, J. (1991, Oct 21). 'Citing Corruption by Kenya Officials, Western Nations Are Canceling Aid.' *New York Times*. Retrieved on August 29, 2017 from <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/21/world/citing-corruption-by-kenya-officials-western-nations-are-canceling-aid.html?pagewanted=all&mcubz=0>.

¹⁶⁷ Kamau, J. (2017, July 12). 'Biwott used state house links to create business empire.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved August 30, 2017 from <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/How-Nicholas-Biwott-amassed-immense-wealth-/1056-4010966-ql8dikz/index.html>.

¹⁶⁸ Perlez, J. (1991, Oct 21). *New York Times*.

¹⁶⁹ Weingrod, A. (1968). 'Patrons, Patronage, and Political Parties.' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 10(4), 377-400. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/177636>.p.379.

¹⁷⁰ Bayart, Ellis & Hibou (1999), p.71.

exploited during the social crisis, uncertainty and finally extended to the centre of the state.¹⁷¹ In a period where a president felt his support was falling they used state patronage to claim it back. For example, when Moi sensed his support was declining, in 1982 he increased the number of ministers from 21 to 27.¹⁷² Through the ministers KANU government became influential on the private and public platform. All of their policies became the centre of the ruling class and corruption was the reward to the political patronage.¹⁷³

Political patronage created a platform under which posts were awarded to those who were conformists. The boards and chief executives of many parastatal in Kenya were appointed through political patronage where the revenues collected were channelled to serve the political interests of KANU and subsequent parties. Those chosen had personal and political ties to those in the state power. For example, KVDA-parastatal- under which the Turkwel dam operated had political appointees. As a result, in many years the agency did not initiate any meaningful and sustainable development despite having the support of the local communities.¹⁷⁴ More than twenty years after, state patronage has been the order of the day, KANU and later on Kibaki and Uhuru regimes all appointment those termed political failures to head KVDA despite having little to show in their region.¹⁷⁵ The regime used the cabinet to make a decision that was favourable to them and more importantly allocates public resources especially through their own companies and contracts and jobs to people in an exchange with other favours.¹⁷⁶ For instance, Biwott who was in charge of energy was alleged to have influenced much of Turkwel dam and accused of inflating the prices of petrol which his company *Kobil* supplied to the contractors at Turkwel. The act did not give a chance for scrutiny of resource allocation of such developments and ministers who served under those specific dockets were largely authoritarian.

In addition, Turkwel executives were allegedly picked based on their personal loyalty which worked purely for the interest of their political patron.¹⁷⁷ Through such dealings, corruption plagued the state in debts. Loyalty rather than competence and service delivery was the defining

¹⁷¹ Berman, J. B. (1918). 'Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: The politics of uncivil nationalism.' *African Affairs*, 97, pp.305-341.

¹⁷² Arriola (2009), p.1347.

¹⁷³ Berman, J. B. (1918).p.307.

¹⁷⁴ Kakai, O. (2018, Jan 5). 'Disband 'disgraceful' KVDA, Lonyangapuo pleads.' *Daily Nation*. p.19.

¹⁷⁵ Kakai, O. (2018, Jan 5). p.19.

¹⁷⁶ Arriola (2009), p.1346.

¹⁷⁷ Oral interview with an elder in Kasei on 7th may 2017.

criteria of appointment to head KVDA that managed Turkwel dam. Consequently, few Pokot and Turkana were able to work at KVDA apart from one Pokot who served as a member to the commission in KVDA while Mr. Imana a former Member of Parliament from the Turkana community held the position of a CEO.¹⁷⁸ Initially, KVDA was headed by a Keiyo who came from the same community with Biwott and who was replaced by some other Kalenjin members as the CEOs of the firm. Clearly, the intrigues affected the Pokot and Turkana communities who were rarely considered for a top position in KVDA even though they had qualified personnel.

Through the specific CEOs, tenders for security, cleaning services, or maintenance services were procured, definitely with inflated rates.¹⁷⁹ The president with powers at their disposal and with their trusted cabinet ministers both restricted the distribution of patronage into their hands by the use of KANU,¹⁸⁰ NARK Kenya and later Jubilee political parties. Therefore, those who wanted to access public resources had to pledge their allegiance to them and which automatically symbolised supporting the regime. This at the end encouraged nepotism throughout government institutions and exclusion of the majority Kenyans.

Using such channels, public funds ended up in private accounts.¹⁸¹ This later on affected schools and medical services in the Turkwel region as the project became a cash cow only to enrich some specific individuals. The promised benefits including jobs both in the firm and in the mechanised agriculture did not capitalise. However, THD ended up dividing the population along ethnic lines and as a result each community claimed ownership of the entire project to maximise its output. This resulted into hydro-politics that is discussed below.

4.3 Turkwel dam Hydro-politics

The multipurpose Turkwel Hydro-electric Dam (THD) was supposed to modernise the Pokot and Turkana region. The project was to produce electricity for use both at the local and national level; over 30,000 acres put under mechanised agriculture with the dam being the main source of water and more importantly the plantation serve as a buffer zone between the conflicting

¹⁷⁸ Oral interview with Siwa at French Camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

¹⁷⁹ Bayart-F, Ellis, S. & Hibou, B. (1999). p.26.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Pokot and Turkana communities.¹⁸² The dam was also intended for large scale fishing and as tourist destination for the local and international communities. In line with this, two air strips and a state lodge was constructed in the heart of Nasalot Game Park.

However, THD a government project was all of a sudden ‘owned’ by different factions and became an arena under which hydro-politics; authoritarian and development agenda were played out. This was both in public meetings, courts and parliament and involved the locals, leaders, institutions and countries. For instance, hydro-politics was witnessed when residents of Turkwel and their leaders both in public meetings, parliament and courts claimed ownership of the firm¹⁸³ while some referred to it as the seventh wonders of the world and whitest of the white elephant.¹⁸⁴ Also ,a regional body, the Kerio Valley Development Authority(KVDA) and national- Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) all government institutions, competed over the mandate to manage the project.

Despite the fights over ownership, in the local level, the Pokot and Turkana had various cooperation meetings over Turkwel River and dam. However, neither tangible treaty nor law emanated from those meetings instead they came out trading words that sparked more division between the two.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, the two continued to fight over the control of Turkwel dam a state owned project. This prompted the Turkana councillors to move to court and block the transfer of some wards from Turkana south constituency to Pokot. To them, the transfer meant a shift of boundary from the Kesei hills to the west banks of the Turkwel River and included the Turkwel dam as ‘Turkwel’ is theirs.¹⁸⁶ Pokot responded by a threat to reposes all the land on which the plant is constructed. They argued that, the particular area was their ancestral and communal land whose boundary was at Kakong deep inside the Turkana territory as it used to be before the coming of the British.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² Royet-gounin, A. (2000, October 25). ‘Here come the facts on Turkwell.’ *Daily Nation*. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/1192-329364-maup4e/index.html>.

¹⁸³ Ndurya, M, & Bii, B. (2011, December 1). ‘Turkwel- The 6bn white elephant.’ *Daily Nation*. Retrieved on 18th march 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/counties/west-pokot/Turkwel-the-Sh6bn-white-elephant>.

¹⁸⁴ News desk. (2013, November 3). ‘Kenya’s white elephants.’ *Daily Nation*. Retrieved July 22, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/DN2/failed-public-projects/957860-2058220-nwv6soz/index.html>.

¹⁸⁵ Shanzu, I. (2015, May 26). ‘Leaders trade accusations during Turkwel peace caravan visit.’ *The Standard*. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/mobile/article/2000163515/leaders-trade-accusations-during-turkwel-peace-caravan-visit>.

¹⁸⁶ Gekara, M. (2012, May 26). ‘Boundary review sparks feuds over wealth.’ *Daily Nation*. Retrieved on 18th march 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/politics/Boundary-review-sparks-feuds-over-wealth>.

¹⁸⁷ Oral interview with police officer Felix Okinei, Sorghea Camp, Turkwel, May 4, 2017.

For the lost land, therefore, the communities demanded to be compensated from the state of over Ksh800 million for the land on which the dam was constructed.¹⁸⁸ They wanted the money to serve as a supplement to the hundreds of poor herdsmen and farmers who were displaced. The money was to also help pay bills for those who were affected by the recurring waterborne diseases and malaria in Turkwel due to the stagnant reservoir. The communities also alleged that despite the fact that electricity was generated from their region it did not benefit them.¹⁸⁹ To them it was through the dam that they lost their pasture and water, hence, their economic activities.

Kenya's Members of Parliament (MPs) from Turkana, Pokot, and Trans Nzoia also called for the allocation of revenue collected from the dam among the affected counties. The MP for west Pokot Mr Philip Rotino in one of the debates said that five percent of the total revenue earned from the Turkwel dam owned by KVDA should be remitted to the Pokot County Council.¹⁹⁰ He pointed out that the local economic activities such as like livestock and bee-keeping were disrupted despite the fact that they were social right and obligations and indices of social relationship.¹⁹¹ Other members of parliament highlighted out that the dam killed various economic activities in the region which were dear to the communities. For example, both honey refinery at Kodich and weekly cattle market days at Turkwel where farmers brought their animals for sale before the dam was constructed were done away with.¹⁹² Their market yards were reduced because the land around was submerged in water. Therefore, politicians lobbied for compensation of those displaced and their businesses destroyed during the construction of the dam¹⁹³ or remit part of the revenue collected from the Turkwel dam to the local county councils to help recover their lost treasured possession.

¹⁸⁸ Koech, E. (2004, January 14). 'Villagers want Sh800 million compensation for land.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved July 22, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/1056-270650-lr3nkuz/index.html>.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁹⁰ Kenya National Assembly official record (Hansard), (8th October 1997). 'Remittance of Turkwel Dam Revenue to Pokot County Council.' Retrieved 15 April, 2017, from <https://books.google.co.ke/people+of+turkwel+area&source>.

¹⁹¹ Gulliver, P.H. (1966). 'The Family Herds: A Study of two Pastoral Tribes in East Africa. The Jie and Turkana.' London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. p.1.

¹⁹² Kenya National Assembly official record (Hansard), (8th October 1997). 'Remittance of Turkwel Dam Revenue to Pokot County Council.' Retrieved from 15 April, 2017, from <https://books.google.co.ke/people+of+turkwel+area&source>.

¹⁹³ Njeri. R., (2013, July 3). 'Senator in bid for compensation.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved on 11/12/2017 from: <http://www.nation.co.ke/counties/1107872-1903572-7qn7p/index.html>.

In addition, they argued that the dam interfered with Nasolot game reserve and hence revenue collected and flow of the river. They asserted that both Turkana and Pokot county council used to collect revenue from the game reserve which is shared by the two communities and therefore the game reserve was an integral source of revenue for the two county councils.¹⁹⁴ However, between 1983 and 1991 the noises which emanated from the construction site scared away a lot of wild animals from the Nasolot reserve. They lost the revenue after the wild animals died from the commotion that ensued from building the dam. Similarly, they questioned the government why the downstream was dry with irregular water flow between December 1996 and April 1997 despite the promise that it could only have been for a short while interference.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, up to the time of this study, the downstream was dry, save for stagnant patches of water.

As the Turkwel dam hydro-politics continued, two other county councils joined in calling for their share. On one hand, Trans Nzoia county council argued that the river emanated from its territory on the slopes of Mt Elgon and therefore they needed a share of revenue generated from the Turkwel Dam for the purposes of conservation. On the other, Turkana County argued that historically it used the waters from Turkwel dam for the longest period and therefore it was the rightful party to have an alternative usage of that river. However, Turkana alleged that politicians from the Pokot community had an upper hand in decision making concerning Turkwel River and dam from 1992. They accused them of being closer to power as majority were KANU representatives unlike Turkana and Trans Nzoia in the opposition- FORD Kenya. The instances culminated into a new source of conflict of which Turkana and Pokot political figures were accused of fuelling.

Outside Parliament, the Pokot and Turkana communities also sought judicial interpretation of THD ownership. They both went to court for a nod over the use and control over Turkwel dam. In March 2015, Turkana county government and politicians led by Senator John Munyes, Woman representative Joyce Emanikor and MPs Christopher Nakuleu (Turkana North), Daniel Epuyo (Turkana West), James Ekomwa (Turkana South), John Nakara (Turkana Central) and

¹⁹⁴ Kenya National Assembly official record (Hansard), (8th October 1997). 'Remittance of Turkwel Dam Revenue to Pokot County Council.' Retrieved on 11/12/2017 from <https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=Mfdyt7i8g7sC&pg=PT17&lpg=PT17&dq=Remittance+of+Turkwel+Dam+Revenue+to+Pokot+County+Council&source>.

¹⁹⁵ Kenya National Assembly official Record, (1997 Aug 14). 'Irregular flow of water in River Turkwel.' *Question Number 563*. Retrieved on 4th March 2018, from <https://books.google.com.et/books?>

Protus Akujah (Loima) filed a case in the high court to compel interior cabinet secretary Nkaisery and the attorney general to deal with the insecurity in Turkana county and its borders.¹⁹⁶ In the filed case, they wanted the issue of the boundary at Turkwel sorted out as it was one that caused conflict between the two communities that they blamed on West Pokot County. They protested against Act No 5 of 1992 and claimed it was illegal as it axed the Turkwel dam project that was leased by the defunct Turkana county council to KenGen from them and placed under west Pokot administration.¹⁹⁷ Like their leaders, Turkana locals believed there was an alteration of the boundary in 1992 and that the 1963 agreement placed the boundary from Juluk to Turkwel including Lochoke and therefore it should be followed.¹⁹⁸ To them, Turkwel was under Kaputir location, Lorogon sub location, Turkana south sub county in Turkana County which is historical.

As tension heightened the two communities with their leaders converged either at Kainuk or Turkwel for peace meetings. They called for cooperation over the Turkwel River and dam despite the water scarcity experienced in the region. However, in many occasions and due to the sensitivity of the issue, the meetings turned hostile in spite of the kind of people who attended. In one instance, the then Rift valley Regional Coordinator Osman Warfa was forced to cut short his speech because Members of Turkana County Assembly (MCA) and Turkana south MP James Lomenen publicly declared that the Turkwel project was theirs and accused the Pokot community of trying to evict them from their land by use of cattle rustling and banditry. They dared the Pokot community to take not only Turkwel but even Kainuk and Lorogon which they claimed ownership.¹⁹⁹ Warfa only promised that the government would disarm the locals to offer a long time solution to the Turkwel issue.

After a while, however, the county assembly of Pokot retaliated and gave an ultimatum to the national government to end the conflict that was prone around Turkwel.²⁰⁰ The deputy speaker to the county government of west Pokot, Johnson Losolian, threatened to sue the government

¹⁹⁶ Kakah, M. (2015, March 31). 'MPs boost Turkana's case against State over insecurity, boundaries.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved June 24, 2017 from <http://www.nation.co.ke>.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁹⁸ Oral interview with Ekai at Sorghea camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

¹⁹⁹ Shanzu, I. (2015, May 26). 'Leaders trade accusations during Turkwel peace caravan visit.' *The Standard*. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/mobile/article/2000163515/leaders-trade-accusations-during-turkwel-peace-caravan-visit>.

²⁰⁰ Netya, W. (2015, November 25). 'Residents issue ultimatum to govt over West Pokot insecurity.' *The Standard*. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/mobile/article/2000098640/residents-issue-ultimatum-to-govt-over-west-pokot-insecurity?pageNo=2>.

because it failed to offer security for its people, especially after more than 17 deaths occurred around Turkwel dam, in the villages of Lorogon and Ombolion and left others with fear and inactive.²⁰¹

Similarly, parastatals, KVDA and KenGen, were embroiled in hydro politics of the Turkwel dam. In the first incidence, KVDA claimed compensation from KenGen of over eight billion Kenya shillings for supplying water that generated electricity.²⁰² It demanded that KenGen sign an agreement without which they would have sought redress in the court. Alternatively, they threatened to disconnect water supply to the generation plant in protest of the move by the state to hand over power plant to KenGen which they saw as an insult to them. This was in spite of the fact that they were the initial owner of the project that generated about Sh1.6 billion and only received unjustified kSh45 million for conservation.²⁰³ However, KenGen did not respond.

Consequently, KVDA demanded Ksh 7billion from KenGen for the assets it had taken including the Turkwel dam.²⁰⁴ In one incidence, KVDA executive officer (CEO) David Kimosop claimed that KenGen took over many assets from them and failed to sign a memorandum of understanding for compensation. He claimed that the resource had not helped the communities as expected. Therefore there was need to kick-start the mechanised agriculture of more than 30,000 hectares which had stalled due to lack of finances of about Ksh 120 million annually.²⁰⁵ The money was expected to be collected from KenGen after the sale of electricity.

The promulgation of the constitution in 2010 Kenya opened a Pandora box over the Dam again. Competition emerged between the national government and the county governments on who should own and manage regional authorities. The ministry of energy conflicted with the county government of Turkana, Uasin Gishu, Tran's Nzoia and West Pokot on who should own KVDA under which the Turkwel dam operated. Consequently, the constitution on devolution argued that regional authorities should operate under the counties. Therefore KVDA qualifies to be placed either county. However, there was no clear explanation for in which county

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Kimuge, S. (2016, August 10). 'Agency demands sh8bn in assets row with KenGen.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved July 22 2017 from <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/1056-3338676-61ao9iz/index.html>

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Ndanyi, M. (2016, Aug 15). 'KVDA seeks Sh 7b payout from KenGen.' *The Star*. Retrieved August 30, 2017 from https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2016/08/15/kvda-seeks-sh7b-payout-from-kengen_c1403321.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

KVDA was supposed to operate from and how many counties were to benefit from the dam given the many traditional regions the Turkwel River traverses.

It was due to the above context that leaders from West Pokot County called for the restructuring of KVDA. They pointed out that the parastatal had bloated workforce with little capacity to operationalize its function. They instead asked KenGen to stop remitting the annual Ksh 45 million to KVDA but be taken by the Pokot count.²⁰⁶ However, locals to locals, leaders over years had used the dam and refurbishing of Turkwel state lodge situated at Riting'i as a campaign tool every electioneering year which was idle for over 28 years. This is despite the fact that it cost tax payers a lot of money for its construction in mid 1980s.²⁰⁷

Elsewhere, the international community was greatly involved in the Turkwel dam hydro-politics, especially from the European community states. France and the United Kingdom (UK) were largely accused of financing a white elephant project in the name of Turkwel dam. News both locally and internationally was rife that alleged the collaboration of Kenyan representatives and the two countries with intent to inflate the prices of the dam. The intrigues were so fierce that the then chief of delegate to the European Economy Community (EEC) in Kenya Mr Achim Kratz ran for his life to Lesotho after his stinging memorandum to EEC headquarters in Brussels giving details of corruption surrounding Turkwel dam and alleging the dam was built on an earthquake fault line which would silt up in less than 50 years.²⁰⁸

France through local and international news channels denied the allegations. It wondered how it was the only one accused given that the feasibility studies were done by Norway and Britain and financed by the European Community. Indeed, the contract was awarded by KVDA with advice from Britain's Watermeyer, Legge, and Piesold & Uhlmann after following the required procedure.²⁰⁹ In her explanation, 295 million francs was a grant which was 13.4 per cent of the total money needed to construct Turkwel dam reached in the 1989 Dakar summit to partially

²⁰⁶ Cheserek, E. & Anami, L. (2013, April 11). 'North Rift in row over control of authorities.' *Standard*. Retrieved July 25, 2017, from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/mobile/article/2000081279/north-rift-in-row-over-control-of-authorities>.

²⁰⁷ Oral interview with Sawe at Riting'i on 7th July 2017.

²⁰⁸ Mutunga, K. (2011, August 16). 'White elephants from the Nyayo Era.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved July 22, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/DN2/White-elephants-from-the-Nyayo-Era-/957860-1219924-63omnv/index.html>.

²⁰⁹ Royet-gounin, A. (2000, October 25). 'Here come the facts on Turkwell.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/1192-329364-maup4e/index.html>.

cancel the 250-million-franc of Kenya's debt that had reached 24-per cent level.²¹⁰ The additional 2.2 billion French francs was a chip, and 21.7 per cent of it was treasury loan, 58 percent as guaranteed export credit where 20.1 per cent was commercial credits. Accordingly, France said that the dam filled up in 1990 and never stopped to produce electricity especially between 1999-2000 droughts being the only project in the country that produced electricity of 30-40 percent to the national grid and by 2003 it generated 17 percent of the entire country.²¹¹ However, it was difficult for France to clean herself. It was alleged that its construction company that won the contract was suspected to aid corruptions through kickbacks on the expense of Kenyans tax payers.

Corruption flourished where the control over goods and services or assets valued by the private sector and the degree of discretion was for government officials and politicians to allocate resources.²¹² It reduced where transparency was embraced in policy making. Kenyan politicians avoided the later. They took advantage of the culture and traditions of the majority Turkana and Pokot convinced them to believe that they are the owners of the project and therefore, all the employees in the firm should come from their respective communities. However, it only served as trick and means by which the politicians especially in the ruling party KANU used to divert the attention of Kenyans and in return influence the tendering process of Turkwel dam project, hence corruption.²¹³

Consequently, Turkwel dam became one of the projects surrounded by allegations of corruption scandals which were so rampant especially in Moi's tenure. For instance, despite the regime resisting political reforms, in 1996 Kenya ranked as the third most corrupt country out of the fifty countries which were rated in the world.²¹⁴ In return, she experienced 'donor allergy' for the rampant corruption allegations especially in the energy sector that happened during the construction of the Turkwel dam. The donor nations argued that Kenya awarded the tender to construct the Turkwel dam without a competitive process and the cost of the entire

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Viguire, A. (2003, August 13). 'Turkwell dam not a white elephant.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/1192-281184-lublo1/index.html>.

²¹² Elliott, K. A. (1997). 'The problem of corruption: A tale of two countries.' *Nw. J. Int'l L. & Bus.*, 18, 524.p.529.

²¹³ Oral interview with Siwa at French Camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

²¹⁴ Elliott, K. A. (1997), p.528.

project was hiked more times than what was budgeted because of the kickbacks paid to the government officials.²¹⁵

Occasionally, THD was also a symbol of cooperation among the two communities. For example, Tegla Loroupe foundation through the sponsorship of the retired Kenya marathon legend Tegla Lorupe from the Pokot community collaborated with KenGen and other financiers for peace race. The initiative encouraged the Turkana and Pokot warriors to compete at Turkwel dam to embrace development and leave the gun. With time was difficult to convince the population that the sport was purely to encourage interaction and foster peace but not a war. The competition stopped indefinitely in 2011 due to the conflict in Turkwel. It was later on alleged that the elites from both communities took advantage of the *ngorokos* who interpreted the sport as war and between the two communities and therefore, the community that won the race demanded the project to be handed over to them. The tensions and conflict would later escalate after the *ngoroko* embraced *mulika-mwizi* and the installation of the Safaricom booster at Riting'i market in Turkwel as it is explained in the next section.

4.4 Mobile telephony and Turkwel dam conflict.

With a goal to open up, modernise and link the region to the world, Safaricom (one of the mobile telephone network provider company in Kenya) telecommunications installed a booster at Riting'i an adjacent to the dam in 2007. The idea was built on the the initial plans of THD of transforming the region. Therefore, communication activities were vital in achieving the desired objectives. Despite well intention, the effect of a simple act had far reaching adverse impacts in exacerbating Pokot- Turkana conflict. This was especially true with the addition of *mulika-mwizi* (simple mobile phone with a durable battery) that became a new 'gun' to the *ngoroko* (warrior from both Turkana and Pokot community). The mobile telephony was highly embraced by the *ngoroko* giving a new dynamic to the Turkwel dam conflict. Unlike before, each *ngoroko* acquired a *mulika-mwizi* mainly to coordinate and communicate during the raid and fighting between the two communities. The mobile telephony and proliferation of AK 47 rifles in the centers of Loima hills²¹⁶ in South Turkana District, exacerbated Turkwel conflict between the two communities.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Kamau, J. (2017, April 23). 'Amin, Soviet link to Pokot arms race.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved June 26, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Amin--Soviet-link-to-Pokot-arms-race/1056-3900090-240cbn/index.html>.

However, with Hydro-politics and state patronage over the Turkwel dam flaring, the feeling of exclusion, anger, betrayal, tensions and conflict between the Pokot and Turkana was rising as well. In contradictory to what the installation of telecommunication facility and the emergency of the mobile telephony was intended for, the service was taken advantage for by the locals in unleashing their anger and immediately became a new ‘gun.’ The use of *mulika-mwizi* in the Turkwel introduced new dynamics by heightening the conflict and creating an opportunity through which the two communities exploited the resource. The telephony activities of *mulika-mwizi* and its fears of conflict was felt as far as Kapenguria near kitale. I observed, during field research, at the bus terminals of Makutano how school going children more so those headed to Turkwel competed to board the few available taxis. However, their parents did not accompany them due to the dangers associated with the road specifically to adults. Similarly, the fewer taxis and buses which operated on that particular route did not guarantee a return trip in the day time despite the tripled charges. Some though rarely, plied at night. This was due to the high probability of highway banditry attacks by the Turkana and Pokot *ngoroko* for money, bottled water and most importantly the *mulika-mwizi* who spared school going children during the day. Therefore, in day time adults were advised to seat in the middle of children to camouflage.

Despite the adult camouflage, drivers would stop at various stages more so at Ortum usually for prayers and briefs to passengers in case of an attack by *ngoroko* and importantly wait for others to move in a convoy for security purposes.²¹⁷ The driver advised of how important *mulika-mwizi* was. It will rescue many from humiliation and death whenever the *ngoroko* attacked! The dynamics introduced by *mulika-mwizi* is equated to other small weapons like AK47 rifle in the region. Both are simple to operate, readily available, low in cost, extremely lethal, simple to use, durable, highly portable, easily concealed, and possessed all legitimate military, police, and civilian uses. As a result, they are present in virtually every society.

The demand for *mulika-mwizi* heightened after the telecommunication booster eased communication to the remote areas of the region. Contrary to Turkwel, such developments in other parts of the country such as Laikipia County it was used to manage human -elephant conflict.²¹⁸ There, locals used their phones to contact Kenya wildlife officers and report whenever elephants were seen loitering away from their destinations. The initiative was made

²¹⁷ Interview with a taxi driver at Kapenguria on 4th May 2017.

²¹⁸ Graham, M. D., Adams, W. M., & Kahiro, G. N. (2012). ‘Mobile phone communication in effective human elephant–conflict management in Laikipia County, Kenya.’ *Oryx*, 46(1), pp.137-144.

possible by the communities embracing technology to avoid human-wildlife conflict and deaths of both human beings and animals. In Turkwel, after the installation of the telecommunication booster, acquisition of *mulika-mwizi* became a 'new gun' from 2007 onwards.²¹⁹ The situation was made worse with the poor road network in the region and aided by the topography.²²⁰ The hilly environment gave *ngoroko* an easy vision together with communication through their *mulika-mwizi*. The police officers both from the anti-stock theft and GSU sections experiences difficult time to intervene and counter *ngoroko* initiated raids due to their well-coordination through *mulika-mwizi*.

Indeed, from 2007 onwards, *mulika-mwizi* became a new 'gun' of *ngoroko* away from the existing AK-47.²²¹ Unlike the AK-47, the new 'gun,' however, covered a wider range with reduced deaths. For example, at *lami nyeusi*, (black tarmac) more into the Pokot territory, a stretch between the Turkwel dam junction ,Turkwel River belt and Kainuk, turned out to be the most dangerous due to the conflicts witnessed there over ownership of the dam between the Pokot and Turkana and fought through the object. The *ngoroko* capitalize on the Safaricom network booster at the Turkwel hill and a few kilometers away from the dam to coordinate their road banditry on the unsuspecting travelers. Similar cases are in Kakong a few kilometers from Turkwel on your way to Lodwar. In these two areas, people are usually hijacked, or their vehicles shot at with the aim of getting *mulika-mwizi*, bottled water, and money.²²² Generally, the installation of Safaricom booster at the Turkwel hills was a blessing as well as a curse to the region.²²³

The Pokot and Turkana communities viewed the Turkwel dam and specifically the installation of communication booster at Riting'i as a curse to them.²²⁴ Initially, they had regulated perennial cattle rustling experienced only during the rain period. The dam would later complicate their lives and introduce new conflicts. For instance, before the Safaricom booster, between 2002 and 2006 more than 72 Pokot were killed and 35 injured while more than 92 Turkana were killed and 23 injured all competing over the project.²²⁵ Consequently, the two

²¹⁹ Oral interview with the anti stock theft officer of Lorogon at Kainuk on 5th May 2017.

²²⁰ Oral interview with a Nurse at Lorogon on 5th May 2017.

²²¹ Oral interview at GSU camp at Turkwel, French camp on 6th May 2017.

²²² Interview with kengen official at Ngara offices on 8th April 2017.

²²³ Oral interview with Okinei at Sorghea Camp. Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

²²⁴ Oral interview with Siwa at French Camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

²²⁵ Dolan, G. and Pkosing, D., (December, 2005). 'Turkwel-Gorge Project: A Real Opportunity to Transform the Pokot-Turkana conflict.' *Catholic Justice and Peace Commission*. p .7.

communities lost a huge number of animals. For example, the Pokot lost an estimate of 1761 livestock and the Turkana lost over 2345 animals in the same period.²²⁶

However, the above occurrences were by and large due to the steps undertaken concerning the Turkwel dam which aggrieved the locals. For example, neither a Turkana nor a Pokot was considered by KenGen when it sold its shares to the public in 2006. The injustice and scandalous was worse given there was no single kilowatt of electricity provided to the local communities.²²⁷ This left them aggrieved and thought that Kenyans should not have participated in the process because by buying shares they meant the entire country exploited the two communities and did not give them an alternative way of development.²²⁸ This was the greatest dynamic that aggrieved both the Pokot and Turkana and later on spilled over to the period the telecommunication booster was installed at Turkwel.

Through their *mulika-mwizi*, the Pokot and Turkana *ngoroko* coordinated and fought at Turkwel over the above and other number of issues. Firstly, they were aggrieved to the fact that locals were only employed as support staff while outsiders as skilled labourers. They fought against KVDA and KenGen officials who employed them as security guards and cleaners.²²⁹ Similarly, they were aggrieved that neither the cleaning nor security companies was owned by them. They argued that influential people in the government or their cronies who came from outside the Turkana and Pokot region were the owners of these companies.²³⁰ Indeed, Cornerstone Security Company, headquartered in Nairobi was alleged to be owned by a Keiyo and employed 20 (39) percent Pokot and 20(39) percent of Turkana out of the total employee of 52.²³¹ Similarly, *MASON* cleaning company also based in Nairobi employed 14 Pokot and 13 Turkana people among its 33 staff.

The communities were also discontented with the influences of politicians and higher ranking people in the country who awarded themselves contracts and tenders to manage the security and cleaning companies in the project.²³² For instance, during my research period, I realized that both *Riley Services security* and *Superbroom* cleaning companies were new while little

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Dolan, G. (2006, May 3). 'Take the guns too, like everything else.' *Daily Nation*. p.17.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ Oral interview with James a youth in Sorgha on 4th May 2017

²³⁰ Oral interview with Lokong a youth at Kainuk on 5th May 2017

²³¹ Dolan & Pkosing (December, 2005), p.14.

²³² Oral interview by Yano at Sorgha Camp at Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

was known about their ownership apart from being headquartered in Nairobi.²³³ However, the locals, especially the *ngoroko* complained of bias in recruitment of cleaners and security guards which took ethnic dimension²³⁴ and as by 2017 all their employees were all from the Pokot community.²³⁵ In the event, they competed over those manual jobs which in return heightened the conflicts. For instance, in 2011 Pokot overrun French camp and forced both KenGen and KVDA staffs to be evacuated to Kitale and Eldoret offices.²³⁶ The attacks were believed to have been coordinated through *mulika mwizi*. During this conflict, the Turkana people did not get drinking water as all pipes connected to Lorogon village were destroyed by the Pokot. To manage the situation, GSU officers were forced to offer security to the Turkana communities especially from Lorogon to fetch water from the Turkwel River for thirty minutes, twice in a week.²³⁷ However, the police officers also feared of the ambush from the Pokot *ngoroko* due to the communication gadgets they used.

Through their *mulika-mwizi*, the locals coordinated revenge missions. Previously, the two communities invaded their perceived enemies spontaneously with higher chances of deaths; however, from 2007 onwards their missions were well organized through *mulika-mwizi* with minimal deaths. For instance, during my field work-in May, the beginning of the rainy season - a Pokot boy of around ten years from Kasei village herding an estimated two hundred goats was kidnapped by the Turkana and taken to Nakwomoru village deep into Turkana side. Information of her kidnap was spread fast through *mulika-mwizi*, and within a short time, they were in touch with his kidnappers. Normally, whenever such incidences amongst the Turkana and Pokot happened, the victims were killed and all their animals were taken away. However, due to the well-coordinated missions, they learnt the boy's mother was a Turkana which turned out to be an interesting case because it was a rare incidence since the dam was constructed.²³⁸

Accordingly, as the boy was being handed over to the police by Katilu ward representative Mr. Nadome and his colleague from Nakwamoru ward at Kainuk, the tension was high. They insisted their two land cruiser vehicles to be in the middle of the GSU officers in a convoy of six vehicles. While at Kasei, the Pokot village- they and their drivers were the last to come out

²³³ Oral interview with Esokon a youth from Nasolot at University of Nairobi on 21st April 2017.

²³⁴ Oral interview with Ekai at Sorghea camp at Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

²³⁵ Oral interview with full gospel pastor at Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

²³⁶ Oral interview with inspector of police Kainuk 5th May 2017.

²³⁷ Oral interview with Police officer at GSU camp Turkwel on 5 May 2017.

²³⁸ Oral interview with a teacher in Lodwar High school on 9th May 2017.

of their vehicles. In a speech of thanks, Kasei chief gave a hint of what the Pokot *ngoroko* had planned to incase anything happened to their herder.²³⁹ *Mulika-mwizi* was a key garget during the negotiations to save the life of the boy. It was through the phone that a ransom of fifty thousand shillings was reached and paid by the Turkana south Member of Parliament. This was after a long negotiation which involved the Turkana and Pokot representative in touch with the Officer Commanding Station (OCS) of Kainuk police, Mr. Waweru, the Kainuk anti-stock theft unit and Nakwomoru GSU camp under inspector Okinei to save the life of the young boy.²⁴⁰ The fear was that other means of communication could have jeopardized the process and most probably led to the death of the boy.²⁴¹

The two community's culture and traditions encouraged more *ngoroko*.²⁴² These are respected group of herders who in most cases turned up as warriors to protect the community. The school goers are regarded as weak and thus little value to the family. Therefore, there is high rate of school dropouts amongst the boy child that ended up joining the *ngoroko* and Kenya Police Reservists (KPR). The irony was that KPRs were paid only five thousand shillings per month and a gun with few rounds of ammunitions. The guns were hired by *ngorokos* and used in banditry and raiding together with *mulika mwizi* and share the spoils with the owners.

However, some of the Pokot and Turkana were against the idea of the KPRs and *ngoroko*. For instance, the Turkana *ng'ekebotok* (mainly farmers) clan viewed it as wrong decision all together²⁴³ because it discouraged education and benefited the politicians and other groups for personal gains whenever they were needed. Their point was that the few who embraced education, shunned conflict. They also blamed the national government for not consulting and involving the locals on what the right project was because to them the telecommunication booster like the dam came to finish them.²⁴⁴ They highlighted that Turkwel region became a conflict theatre since the telecommunication booster inception. It was rare for a week to pass without a case of cattle rustling, banditry or death and kidnaps that called for ransoms around Turkwel firm. This is despite the fact that RECCE squads from GSU, were deployed at

²³⁹ Attended the handing over at kasei on 7th May at kasei.

²⁴⁰ Kasei chief on 7th May 2017 during the handing back the boy.

²⁴¹ Oral interview with antistock theft police of Nakwomoru at Kainuk on 7th May 2017.

²⁴² Oral interview with Ewoi, at SORGHEA camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

²⁴³ Oral interview with Ekai at SORGHEA Camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

²⁴⁴ Oral interview with Ekai at SORGHEA Camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017.

Lorogon, Riting'i and even Kainuk and only achieved little as the road network in the area was a challenge to them.

Compared to the 1982 interethnic conflict which flared in the region, the current conflict was vicious. For a while in 1982 roads to the interior of both communities were made possible by the military that had powerful machines. Accordingly, the 1984 drought and disarmament seized more guns than in 1979 which reduced raiding to small scale thieving that involved small parties from both communities.²⁴⁵ Similarly, before the dam, conflicts only involved cattle rustlers at a small magnitude and then after went to the Lochoke (named after the *Lochoke* fruit common in that area) market, the current place where the dam is built, to drink the local brew and bond.²⁴⁶ Interestingly, their relations changed drastically after the dam. Therefore it was argued that the dam brought division among the two communities where the modernity that accompanied the dam acted as a surprise to the locals. The economic and social changes with frequent interaction led the two communities to realize the importance of the dam that all wanted to own and manage it.

The drastically changes from 1986 introduced a new source of conflict. Claims and counter claims over the Turkwel dam increased the conflict between the Pokot and Turkana despite many not benefiting from it. As a result, many lives of people and animals were lost fighting over the control of the land on which the dam was located.²⁴⁷ The conflict at one point forced President Uhuru Kenyatta to cancel a trip to Turkwel that he was to address the public on 20th July 2013.²⁴⁸ The Turkwel dam dynamic increased the suffering of the communities in Turkwel region especially of Kasei, Mosal, Ombolion and Sarimach in the Pokot side and Juluk, Kainuk, Kaputir, Lorogon and Nakwomoru on the Turkana side.

Many wished Turkwel River was uninterrupted. The reason was that after the dam and telecommunication they were harassed and everything was taken away from them especially after they had suffered for more than one hundred years²⁴⁹ and their areas treated as a no go zone. The dam and telecommunication added to their suffering. For instance, the dam had

²⁴⁵ Oral interview with Ekai at SORGHEA Camp Turkwel on 6th may 2017.

²⁴⁶ Oral interview with Ekai in SOROGHEA Camp Turkwel on 6th May 2017

²⁴⁷ Oral interview at GSU camp at Turkwel on 6th May 2017

²⁴⁸ Tumkou, M. and Ndurya, M. (2013, 24th 12) 'Turkana clan wars a hot potato.' *Daily Nation*.

²⁴⁹ Dolan, G. (2006, May 3). 'Take the guns too, like everything else.' *Daily Nation*. Retrieved June 25, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/1192-121296-17jnds/index.html>.

concentrated crocodiles which are dangerous to human life and their animals. Their relations were tempered with, and expected benefit in the region out of the dam and irrigation was still in a mirage.

The government did little to make the Turkana and Pokot communities feel part of Kenyans. Missionaries who have been in the area for a long time to have had an impact. For example, most schools and food programs in the two counties were either managed or run by churches and NGOs and locals had felt. The Kitale diocese and Lodwar Diocese or NGOs were involved in functions expected to be offered by the government. Turkana and Pokot protected themselves from external aggression and government who found out that the region was the most suitable to be exploited in the expense of others because neither community was consulted, compensated nor included in the implementation of the Turkwel gorge project from its foundations in 1986.²⁵⁰

The introduction of the mobile phone, as the new ‘gun’ placed the police officers in a difficult position. The telecommunication was used both in good intent and as a dupe as well. The police in several occasions mistakenly fought for one faction or the other. The informers from either side fooled them and only to realize the trap long after. For instance, GSU officers teamed up with the Pokot and Kenya police reservist and killed nine herders at Turkwel²⁵¹ after a dupe by the Pokot herdsmen that Turkana was coming to raid at Turkwel grazing reserves. Additionally, lack of infrastructure made the police officers to be caught unaware despite having informers that turned out to be false.²⁵² Consequently, many government officials especially from the national intelligence and Criminal Investigation sections essential for intelligence collection fear working in such a volatile area and hence the reliance on locals as the informers.

The network was utilized as far as to the borders of Uganda. Both the Pokot and Turkana *ngoroko* coordinate their raiding up to the interior of Uganda. This became a problem to the Kenyan police during their daily operations because one *ngoroko* was able to monitor the activity of an entire police station and report to his compatriot as far as Uganda in addition to

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*

²⁵¹ Nation team. (2009, July 16). ‘GSU kill nine herders after false alarm.’ *Daily Nation*. Retrieved June 25, 2017, from <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/regional/1070-625336-avwml5z/index.html>.

²⁵² Oral interview at Kainuk with a police officer on 7th May 2017.

their well versed of terrain. Which again called for action over porous borders; was it not possible for the east African countries to use their technology and tress those involved in the banditry across the countries? Of what essence was the regional bodies that did not benefit their communities? Was it that those involved in the conflicts had connections that were hard to tackle?

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter assessed the contradictions that emerged out of THD and Safaricom telecommunication projects in Turkwel 1991-2015. They are the hydro- politics, state patronage and mobile telephony conflict. On hydro politics, the research found out that locals competed over the control of the Turkwel dam. They wanted not only to own the project but also employment both in KenGen and KVDA. The elites from their two communities were involved in the competition. Members of parliament from these two communities raised the issue in parliament on how jobs and revenue collected from Turkwel should first have benefited the three counties of Trans Nzoia, West Pokot and Turkana. Their argument was that Turkwel River traverses the three counties and therefore it was important that the three counties benefited from it first before the national government. Similarly, government institutions, KenGen and KVDA competed on whose custody Turkwel dam should be and who should collect revenue and at the same time run the activities in the region that will affect the people positively.

The chapter also detailed how the international community got entangled into THD hydro-politics. It explained how the United Kingdom and France financed the construction of the Turkwel dam in spite of allegations of heightened corruption aimed at enriching some people in respective governments. The research found out that those who reported of the allegations were threatened and had to flee out of the country like it was the case with the European Union representative. This was in itself a contradiction of what the community stood for and its member countries.

On hydro-politics, the chapter examined how the dam under KVDA and KenGen actualised party patronage in the region. It found out that, indeed, there was division of public fund to private accounts and using resources intended for development of Turkana and Pokot communities for private gains. Secondly, through KANU, NARK and Jubilee political parties there was the creation of clientelism and actualization of nepotism by both offering tenders

with inflated rates and creation of political positions to hide payment and kickbacks to those involved. This entrenches the belief that the criteria for macro developments tenders in Kenya have rarely been transparent.

Besides the party patronage, the chapter also analyzed the interplay of responses between the Pokot and Turkana *ngoroko* after the introduction of a new 'gun,' the *mulika-mwizi* telephone. The study argues that the mobile telephony turned out to be a major revolution on the conflict experienced in the Turkwel. The aggrieved *ngoroko* took advantage of the telecommunication booster that was installed at Riting'i next to the dam and drastically changed the Turkwel dam conflict. Initially, the *ngoroko* had depended on the AK 47 rifle alone, however, the introduction of *mulika-mwizi* served as an agent of change in the conflict between the Pokot and Turkana. The aggrieved *ngoroko* used the new gun to coordinate raids. They fought KVDA and KenGen staff whom they accused of nepotism in their recruitment process. This was also due to the fact that they were discontented with the government on how it sold KenGen shares to the rest of the country and without considering the locals. Therefore, each of the community with their *ngoroko* fought to gain the ownership of the project.

It concludes that THD became the contested over resource between the Pokot and Turkana on one side, government on the other and mobile telephony as a new 'gun' that exacerbated the Turkwel conflict. This was contrary to what both the government and Safaricom intended to achieve. Although the state responded by deploying various officers including the RECCE squad, anti-stock theft and regular police offices to manage the situation, the *ngoroko* were only rebelled to a smaller magnitude. They soon divided into highway banditry and robbery mainly at Kakong and Lami nyeusi where they preyed on unexpected people a few kilometers away from the THD - the center of conflict. Here, they coordinated their activities using *mulika-mwizi* with the target to get money, bottled water and more *mulika-mwizi*-the new 'gun.'

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

There are many recent studies on resource conflict, its effect on community livelihoods, relations and security.²⁵³ These studies, mainly, focus on the link between conflict and the consequent inefficient natural resource utilization, dismal economic development as well as the decline of state hegemony in matters security. The current project was, fundamentally, consistent to this trend, given that its aim was to augment the extant understanding of resource-based conflicts, intercommunity relations and state patronage. The study examined the Pokot-Turkana inter-ethnic relations using the Turkwel Hydro-electric Dam (THD) as the central arena to illustrate the relationship binary of conflict and cooperation between the two neighbouring communities.

One of the key findings of the study was that the THD exacerbated conflicts between the Pokot and Turkana when either one or both communities felt short-changed in ‘receiving’ benefits accruing from it. Conversely, when there was a level of ‘equality’ in ‘reaping’ from THD, the two forged an interesting mutual understanding which, often, yielded relative cooperation and peaceful co-existence. Consequently, THD was a blessing to peaceful co-existence when it created economic opportunities to members of both communities. On the flipside, it was a curse when it led to displacement of families, stress to the local ecosystem and contested access to the waters of the Turkwel River basin. The resultant duality of conflict and cooperation became an enduring feature of the Pokot-Turkana relations during the period under study.

Another finding of the study, away from the phenomenon of cooperation and conflict, was the dominance of hydro-politics and state patronage over the THD which played out both locally and internationally. Locally, the Pokot, Turkana and their respective leaders each claimed full

²⁵³ For example, Abiodun Alao in his study on natural resources and conflict in Africa argues that conflicts over natural resources are inextricably linked to the complete defectiveness or the selective efficiency of the apparatus of its governance. Ascher, William, and Natalia Mirovitskaya in their edition the economic roots of conflict and cooperation in Africa asserts that there is a strong association between armed violence and development. See A. Alao (2007), *Natural resources and conflict in Africa: the tragedy of endowment* (Vol. 29). University Rochester Press.p.6. & W. Ascher & N. Mirovitskaya (2013), *The Economic Roots of Conflict and Cooperation in Africa*. Springer.p.2.

ownership of the entire firm. They used THD to bolster their campaigns which was enacted in public rallies, parliament and courts. This heightened the contest, animosity, tensions and conflicts over the dam between the two communities. Similarly, national (Kenya Electricity Generating Company-KenGen) and regional (Kerio Valley Development Authority- KVDA) parastatals were embroiled in claims and counter claims over the management THD. On one hand, KVDA argued that the idea of the dam was theirs and therefore could not relinquish its ownership without being compensated. KenGen in turn, argued that they were the mandated organ to generate electricity in Kenya and, therefore, needed to be under them. After a long tussle, the national government intervened and handed the electricity generating section to KenGen while the dam to KVDA, resulting in double ownership. This state of affairs of dual ownership, strained relations and affected service delivery to the Pokot and Turkana communities. Internationally, THD hydro-politics and state patronage were complicated by corruption and nepotism allegations propagated by the Kenya African National Union (KANU) government together with the European countries. For example, Kenyan and French officials were accused of inflating the construction tenders in order to benefit from kickbacks. This led the dam be tagged as “the seven wonder of the world and whitest of the white elephant.” The allegations forced the European economic representative to Kenya to write over the corruption dealings associated with THD to its headquarters in Geneva. In return, he was forced to run for his life to Botswana due to the sensitivity of that particular report.

Besides the polarised hydro-politics of THD, there were positive benefits associated with the project in the region. The delineation of those benefits constituted the other finding of the present study. In 2007, Safaricom Telecommunication Company installed a network booster at Riting’i hills, adjacent to the THD. This opened up the communications capacity in the region benefiting the population. The locals, staff as well as business people were able to communicate and transact. For example, locals used the network to alert the police officers in case of cattle rustling, highway banditry and robbery while business people exchanged money and information through their phones. This provision of communication network in Turkwel region gave hope to the society. However, the simple act of opening up the region had far reaching effects in exacerbating the Pokot-Turkana conflict. The *ngoroko* (warriors) through *mulika mwizi* (simple to use and efficient with durable battery life) coordinated cattle raiding, highway banditry, duped the police and by and large ‘revolutionized’ the traditional ‘sport’ raiding into a deadly affair. The ease with which the network was accessed as far as deep into Uganda posed

a grave challenge to the police in their efforts to intervene and prevent the many raids, kidnaps and deaths that occurred in the region.

The above findings were in tandem with and derived from the three objectives of this study. The first objective examined the Pokot-Turkana relations prior to the building of the THD. The second assessed the new dynamics which were introduced by the building of THD and the third analysed the longer term impact of THD to the Pokot –Turkana relationship. The corresponding hypothesis to the first objective was that the Pokot and Turkana had, largely, a symbiotic relationship in the period preceding the construction of the THD. The study revealed that the two communities were long-term allies. Their peaceful coexistence, however, was interspersed with age-old cattle rustling, which was deemed a ‘dangerous sport’ regulated by culture. The reciprocal livestock raids were primarily used for purpose of raising bride price and restocking. Conversely, the nature of cattle rustling between the Pokot and the Turkana was unique because it did not follow the conventional pattern of perennial raids during the dry seasons. The study noted that most of the cattle rustling activities occurred during wet seasons as opposed to dry spells. The wet seasons provided plenty of pasture and water that enabled animals to gain weight that would sustain them during the long treks after raids. The dry spells, according to the findings were the most peaceful because traditional mechanisms were in place to promote equitable sharing of the meagre water and pasture resources. This finding therefore contradicts the usual explanation of cattle rustling as a result of shortage of pasture and water. However, the historical binary relations of cooperation and conflict between the Pokot and Turkana were tilted by the radical changes introduced by both the colonial and post-colonial Kenya. This resulted into drastic challenges. For instance, there was reduced communal and traditional risk sharing practices among the communities which was replaced by capitalist mentality of owning animals independently. Also, their traditional mechanisms to help those in need by community members were overtaken by the relief camps introduced in the region. The communities were provided with food, housing and other amenities by the government. These developments greatly impacted on the Pokot -Turkana life that the government constructed a multipurpose Turkwel dam to supplement their economic activities.

The second hypothesis posited that the construction of THD introduced new dynamics to the Pokot and Turkana communities. Indeed, the research findings revealed that the dam was both a blessing and curse to the Pokot and Turkana. On one hand, in its initial stages, the construction of the dam displaced an estimated 800 families who in the event lost their socio-economic

activities. Their trees were cut down, culture submerged in the dam and history killed. On the other, the locals got temporary casual jobs for such as cooks, concrete mixers and drivers. However, these jobs only generated subsistence income to the casual labourers and did not improve their economic lives. Undeniably, the creation of the Lorogon slum during the construction period of the dam was a clear indicator that workers were paid meagre wages. Even in the slum, life was not any better, inhabitants suffered from waterborne diseases which were due to lack of clean water and awareness activities. Such outcomes were not expected because plans were to block water flow at the gorge until the dam is filled up. However, since its construction the dam never filled up while the downstream foreign plants proliferated in the dry river bed. This disrupted many socio-economic activities such as fishing and agricultural which was practised throughout the year.

The third hypothesis was that THD introduced a multiple of long term challenges to the Pokot and Turkana people. Generally Turkwel Hydro-electric dam was touted as an agent of 'modernity' and 'civilization' to the Pokot and Turkana people. However, the dam became a binary stage under which the two communities related. The two forged mutual identity that brought cooperation on one hand, pitted them against each other on the other, whenever either felt short changed. The study findings therefore posit that the introduction of Turkwel hydro-electric dam did not live up to its objective of 'revolutionizing' the Pokot and Turkana regions in terms of economic development. Instead, it introduced a new dynamics with long term negative impact on their social, economic and political lives.

Amid all these findings, the study also found out that the state hegemony was missing in the region. Despite the fact that the Pokot and Turkana areas such as Turkwel, Kakong, Ombolion, Kasei, Kainuk, Lami nyeusi and Lorogon were regarded as insecure, people relied on the *ngoroko* for protection and security. The irony is that *ngoroko* were blamed by state and some faction local people for chaos and insecurity in the region. In academic sector, it is the Catholic Church which took over the provision of basic needs to the Pokot and Turkana people. For instance, the best schools in the two counties were either owned or an affiliate of Catholic Church. In essence this took away the two communities sovereignty and instead created dependant mentality on the church to provide education and food while the *ngoroko* provided security. Therefore, due to the breadth of this debate in regard to the cooperation and conflict over resources, there is need for more studies to shed light on possible answers to the challenges the two communities face.

Certainly, however, the Pokot and Turkana region underwent transformation in the period under study. The promulgation of the 2010 constitution introduced devolution which is a new arena under which equality and regional development brought in a new dynamic and hope. Together and independently, Pokot and Turkana counties took the opportunity to initiate inter county peace meetings which became promising steps toward the direction of inter-community coexistence. These initiatives encouraged grass root level dialogue, construction of roads, health facilities and schools. The above development cumulatively, point to an overly more optimistic future than the evidently conflict-prone past.

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