

Determinants of Land Conflicts and their Impacts Social Cohesion in Nakuru County, Kenya

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Abstract:- Land in Kenya is both complex and emotive as a number of people have lost their lives over it due to high degree of inequality in ownership, access and use. Based on where people live, their ancestry and form of land acquisition have often fueled land related conflicts. This study sought to understand the determinants of land conflicts and their impacts on social cohesion in Nakuru, one of the cosmopolitan counties in Kenya. The study is grounded on these objectives: to establish historical development of Land Tenure disputes, to examine deployed Land Tenure systems and challenges to secure land ownership and their implications on social cohesion. The study is underpinned on the Entitlement Theory and used mixed method research design with a sample size of 500 respondents. The research established that historical land disputes have negative implications on social cohesion; deployed land tenure systems did not provide necessary security and stability to land owners; while issues of negative ethnicity, divisive politics, widespread corruption, unresolved historical injustices, among other factors, impede the attainment of secure land ownership in Kenya, leading to conflicts. The study recommends for sustainable efforts to ensure secure and stable land ownership, enforcement of laws criminalizing political incitements and ethnic hate speeches; frantic fight against corruption, involvement of communities in seeking solution to historical land injustices and sensitizing community members against negative to enhance social cohesion.

Keywords:- Land Conflicts, Social Cohesion, Land Ownership.

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts over natural resources are a prominent global feature, often blended with ethnic, religious and tribal resentments and pose a serious social threat to global peace and stability (Klare, 2002). Land is one of such natural resources considered the most valuable, with an ever-appreciating monetary value and the foundation of all other economic resources such as minerals which drives conflicts globally (Sifuna, 2009). This is witnessed in the historical conflict between Israel and Palestine, since 1948, where Israel feels entitled to the land occupied by Palestine especially in East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, West Bank, an issue which has led to incessant violence and death of thousands of people, hence affecting security, peace and social (Reinhart, 2011). A similar situation happened between Iraq and Kuwait, which led to war in early 1990's,

over land-based resources like oil (Klare, 2002). Other international conflicts related to natural resources with the base on land include the conflict between India and Pakistan over the state of Kashmir; Israel and Syria over Western Golan Heights; Korea and North Korea over Korean Peninsula; Russia and Ukraine over Crimean Peninsula which was occupied by Russia in 2014 and assessed by the UN to be part of Ukraine, among other global conflicts. These conflicts have affected security, peace and social cohesion among the populations of these nations. Whereas right to property ownership is a universal human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), dispossession of people of their property in some countries persist (Huth and Allee, 2002).

In Africa, is known for frequent conflicts that no other world continent has experienced, notable in regional conflicts include Ethiopia – Eritrea; Sudan and South Sudan over ownership of several states including Abyei; Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden region; Kenya and Somalia over the boundaries of a maritime region along the Indian Ocean. There are also inter- ethnic conflicts over land itself leading to massive deaths and displacement of people among communities, as well as erosion of peace, security, justice and equality in the society (Derman, Odgaard and Sjaastad, 2007). The conflicts have had negative impact on the quality of social relations among communities, (UNDP, 2015) and interferes with respect of individual and people's collective freedoms, their economic well-being, while undermining the value of tolerance and diversity among groups (Delhey *et al*, 2018).

Kenya is one of the countries most affected by land related conflicts with ethnic bearing, driven by the fact that land is the most valued factor of production in Kenya, with over 80% of the population relying on the only 20% that is arable for the practice of agriculture, leading to increased competition (Okowa, 2015). Additionally, land conflicts have long colonial imprints; they are considered to have started during colonial era and continue to persist in post-colonial Kenya due to colonial land policies and frameworks that led to dispossession, dislocation and displacement of local communities from their lands and unfair redistribution of land in post-colonial era (Syagga, 2011). Ethnicity and politics are considered to be strong triggers to land conflicts and as Boone (2002) argues, land issues and politics of ethnicity are intertwined. Nakuru County in Rift Valley Region, is one of the most cosmopolitan areas in Kenya, is considered the epicenter of land-based conflicts involving indigenous communities, the

Maasai and Kalenjin and non-indigenous communities, mostly the Kikuyu and Kisii. The main reason for conflicts over land is that non-local communities have acquired land which the locals claim to have been their ancestral land, taken away during the British colonial rule between 1895 and 1963 and was not returned to the owners, rather, benefited non-locals after independence, who comprise of more than 35% of the total population in the region (Veit, 2011). Prior to the 1895 declaration of Kenya as a British Protectorate, communities in Kenya occupied portions of land where they lived and used it for cultivation, pastoralism, or for hunting and gathering (Wayumba, 2015). They practiced these primordial economic activities on swaths of land which they owned communally guided by customary practices and regulations Githinji (2017). It was easy to acquire land because of low population at that time, land size was big and land related disputes were simple and easy to manage (Wayumba, 2015).

In post-independent period, many Kenyans were disillusioned because the land was not returned to them. Koissaba (2015) indicates that there were considerable policy developments geared towards addressing the land issue after independence, however, in practice, not much changed. Instead, land owned by the settlers was taken up by elite political class (Ichuloi, 2018). This is supported by Kimaiyo (2015) who argued that in Nakuru County, Kenyans who bought such land were perceived to be 'outsiders' such that, by 1977, close to 95% of the former White Highlands had been bought by Kenyans, with majority of the buyers being from the Kikuyu community from Central Kenya. The feeling by the local Kalenjin and Maasai communities against the non-local community has been immense, with politicians using the land issue as a tool to achieve their goals by creating divisions among communities (Kalma, 2006). This explains the reason for violence during general elections in Kenya (1992, 1997, and 2007) mostly targeting non-local population in Nakuru County, with the political class continuing to use land as a tool for mobilization leading to conflicts, affecting cohesiveness among communities hence the need for this study to find out the determinants of land conflicts and how they impact on social cohesion.

Social cohesion is the quality of coexistence between individuals within their own group and the institutions that surround them (UNDP, 2015) Emile Durkheim, an 18th Century scholar, is considered the first scholar to use social cohesion the inter-dependence among members of different communities within the society, shared loyalties and solidarity. Jenson (1998), having been influenced by Durkheim, narrowed herself to five key components that characterise cohesive societies and in the context of this study: **i. Belonging and Isolation:** the extent to which members of a given community experience or express a sense of connection to the society or the nation and feel pride in it. Land ownership is a primary fact that gives owners a sense of belonging regardless of their place of origin. But when people are denied their rights to own land in the area or are dispossessed, they become isolated, affecting social cohesion negatively. **ii. Inclusion and**

Exclusion: it is the extent to which people have access to resources such as land, homes, education in the society in an equal and proportionate manner. This provides opportunities for individuals to maximize their abilities for the benefit of society, thereby lessening chances of social exclusion, which is characterized by conflicts, resentment and injustices (Oxoby, 2009). **iii. Participation and Non-Involvement:** Participation is active engagement in the affairs and systems of a society, where members take part in decision-making processes that benefit the entire community, regardless of their affiliations. When there is no involvement, there is discord, segregation and divisions, leading to conflicts. Land is considered as one of the factors of exclusion in Nakuru County. **iv. Recognition and Rejection:** Recognition addresses the issue of respect and tolerance; it encourages accommodating differences and opinions of others in a pluralist society. It also celebrates diversities by recognizing it as an important aspect of any vibrant society. Rejection, on the other hand, results when these positive tenets of the society are not recognized. Rejection leads to people feeling ostracized from the society in which they are members. **v. Legitimacy and Illegitimacy:** Legitimacy is about the legal recognition and respect to institutions have been lawfully put in place to act as mediators when conflicts arise in society. It gives conflicting parties security of property ownership and public confidence. When legitimacy fails, parties tend to take the law unto their own hands, thereby violating the principle of justice and human rights, which eventually leads to illegitimacy and conflicts (Jenson, 1998).

When there is a strong sense of identity in the society; inclusion in the affairs of the society; people participate and are involved in the activities of the society; there is respect and tolerance among members and communities within the society and people respect and adhere to the institution in place that offer services, there is strong social cohesion. Lack of or insufficiency of these elements in the society leads to conflicts, with land being identified the underlying driver to these conflicts

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by the Entitlement Theory which was developed in 1974, by Robert Nozick, an American scholar and is anchored on his understanding of rights to property ownership, lawful acquisition and transfer or disposal of property grounded on the principle of justice and equality. Nozick (1974) states that that distribution of property is just if everyone involved is entitled to the property they possess. His theory is based on three main principles: **i. A principle of justice in acquisition:** This principle is an account of how people first come to own property not previously owned, natural world property, what type of properties can be possessed and the manner in which they can be owned. **ii. A principle of justice in transfer:** This principle explains how a person can acquire property from another person, including voluntary exchange, purchase and transference of gifts or inheritance. **iii. A principle of rectification of injustice:** This principle explains means of dealing with properties

that are unjustly acquired or transferred, compensation for those people who have been deprived of their properties through injustices and government acquisition for general public use, among others.

According to Nozick, a just acquisition of property implies lawful ownership and the person who justly acquires property can subsequently transfer the property to someone else who becomes a lawful owner. Justice in acquisition of property, and in this study the acquisition of land, implies entitlement of the same property and the authority to transfer it to someone else as willed by the owner. In relation to the third tenet, persons who incur loss of property they justly and lawfully acquired as a result of unjust and insincere transactions have the right to be compensated. The three tenets of the theory informed the reflection on a rational transaction of land as property for peaceful and cohesive relationships with those in the transaction process. Any violation of these tenets results into conflicts between parties involved in the transaction. Ownership to land as lawfully understood in Kenya is that everyone has a right and privileges to land ownership under the principles of property ownership and justice. However, there have been numerous cases reported where families have been dispossessed of their land through corruption and violence (Ndung'u Land Commission, 2004). Most land conflicts come as a result of undermining the above laid down principles by Nozick and most legal and policy frameworks globally have used these principles in administration of justice. However, Nozick's theory has limitations such that it forms a basis for creation of a strong and inconsiderate system of private property within the framework of free – market economy, which enhances exploitation of those who do not have the means of production (capital). In communities where land is a community property, this theory raises serious concerns of which when they are undermined in land entitlement, can cause the community to use all available means, including violence, to repossess their land. However, the theory remains a strong base for secure land ownership which, if adhered to, can be a preventive measure to many land based conflicts.

III. STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study took place in Nakuru County, which is one of the 47 Counties in Kenya. It is situated in Rift Valley Region and has eleven constituencies covering an area of about 7,495.1Km², a diverse population of about 2,162,202 people (male –1,077,272, female –1,084,835 and intersex - 95) as per the 2019 census (KNBS, 2019). Kalenjin and the Kikuyu communities comprise of about 70% of the population (KNBS, 2019). The county has faced conflicts mostly between the two communities since 1992 climaxing to 2007 Post Elections Violence where 213 people died and thousands displaced in the County (Waki Commission, 2008). Five areas in the County, which were most affected land conflicts were selected, with study population comprising of victims of land conflicts, local population who had been dispossessed of their land and land owners who had purchased land in the area from outside the county. Targeted population was 1706 people, with a sample size of 500 comprising of 400 people for structured questionnaire, 25 elders and 25 government/political leaders for interview schedules and 50 in five Focused Group Discussions (FGDs). Mixed Method Design was used and data collection used the following instruments: questionnaires, interview schedules, FGDs and Observations. Data was analyzed using SPSS, and presented in form tables, graphs and charts for quantitative data while qualitative data was presented in form of verbatim and narrative reports. Sampling techniques used were, purposive simple sampling and snowballing.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Sample Size for the study was 500 and the response rate was as follows: 369 respondents for questionnaire, 44 for interviews and 37 for FGDs, totaling to 450 respondents, which is a response rate of 90%. The findings are discussed under the following thematic areas:

A. Historical Development to Land Disputes

The first objective for this research was to establish historical development to land disputes and respondents were asked to name causes of historical land disputes and Table 1 presents the results:

Cause	Responses	Percentage
Divisive Politics	186	23.6
Negative Ethnicity	171	21.7
Corruption	132	16.8
Inheritance Disputes	104	13.2
Colonial land policies and legal frameworks	98	12.4
Others (inequalities, poverty,	97	12.3
Totals	788	100

Table 1:- Causes of Land Disputes

Source: Field Research (2019)

From Table 1 above, the respondents identified the following factors as the main causes of historical land disputes and conflicts in Nakuru County.

➤ **Divisive Politics:** It identified as the leading cause of land disputes in the County, at 23.60% and the findings are in tandem with research by Kipkemoi (2015) who identified political factors as the leading cause of conflicts in Kuresoi, Nakuru County; Kimenyi and Ndung'u (2006) found out that most clashes in Nakuru County occurred during general elections since 1992 with politicians using the land issue to incite communities. From the observations of the study, there were indications of tensions building up among the communities over the 2022 general elections as exemplified by a key informant from Kuresoi area who stated:

There has been violence in the County mostly between the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu communities since 1992. However, in 2013 and 2017, the two communities were in the same political vehicle and this ensured relatively peaceful situations in the two political seasons. At the moment, we are worried of what will happen in 2022 general elections given the current political undertones. We have been informed by our Kalenjin brothers that *lazima turudishe mkono* (we must reciprocate political support) failure to which *hakutakuwa na amani* (there will be no peace). This is making us worry since such undertones preclude ethnic violence during general elections.

The sentiments were echoed during all the five FGDs, where divisive politics was identified as the leading trigger to land conflicts in the County, with tensions over 2022 general elections building up.

➤ **Negative Ethnicity:** This is another key factor identified by most respondents, at 21.70% and it is used as a tool to fight other communities, deny and discriminate them in the offering of basic services. Ethnicity and politics go hand in hand and this is attested by Oyugi (2000), who argues that ethnicity *per se*, is a positive thing, but when it is politicized, then it becomes negative. Interviews with key informants revealed that despite efforts to correct negative ethnicity through the creation of NCIC, nothing seemed to change. A Key informant stated:

Negative ethnicity is a national cancer that is killing the nation since one cannot get services without being looked with the spectacles of ethnicity. Employment opportunities at Nakuru County Government are only by two dominant communities and minorities are denied opportunities because they don't belong to either Kikuyu or Kalenjin communities. We have also suffered during general elections by virtue of belonging to a different community. Where shall we resort to? Unless we abandon this notion of negative ethnicity which is ingrained in all our realms, our societal and national values will be compromised.

The findings above are also supported by Waki Commission (2008), which established ethnicity as the main cause of conflicts in the region, with land issue as the underlying factor. Negative ethnicity is a major cause of historical land disputes that continues to dominate social relations in the region, thereby creating inequalities, injustices and discrimination among communities.

➤ **Corruption:** The respondents, as illustrated in the table above, also identified corruption as a major cause of historical land disputes, at 16.80%. Corruption constrains secure land ownership as evident in 'British collaborators' who were allocated big chunks of land as an 'appreciation' for their 'co-operation with the ruling colonizers (Syagga, 2011). The vice continued in post-independence period where the Kenyan ruling class allocated themselves large portions of land obtained from white settlers, which was to benefit the landless in the region. But this generated and sustained reactionary conflicts from the local communities to date. During interviews, one key informant stated:

Corruption is a major issue not only in Nakuru, but nationally. It is difficult to get services if you don't 'oil' the hands of those offering the services. I have been going to and from the Lands Office in Nakuru for registration of my land but am informed by some of whom have got the documents that *lazima utoe kitu kidogo mambo yako yatembee kwani hii ni Kenya bwana* (that you have to give bribes for your plans to work since this is Kenya).

These findings are buttressed by the Akiwumi Report (1999), Ndung'u Report (2004), Waki Commission (2008) who identified corruption in land administration, allocation, registration, titling, among others as a major cause of conflicts in the country. During interviews and FGDs, informants identified the following as manifestations of corruption in land issues affecting social cohesion: inducements in the processing of titles and other ownership documents, illegal land allocation that undermines members from other communities, double land allocation to individuals and their family members, land grabbing and dispossessing those who legally owned it, encroachment of public land, among others.

➤ **Other factors identified as causes of historical land injustices:** These include inheritance disputes, with 13.20% which affects members of the same family or community; colonial legal frameworks, policies and historical injustices, identified by 12.40% of the respondents; lack of land identification documents; dependence on land based economy which influences the thinking of the people that to have land is the only source of wealth; poor policies by governments on land; boundary disputes over unclear land boundaries among other factors. Having established the causes of historical land disputes, the research resorted to investigate the consequences of unresolved historical land disputes and the respondents were requested to enumerate the effects of unresolved historical land injustices and the results were as presented in Figure 1.

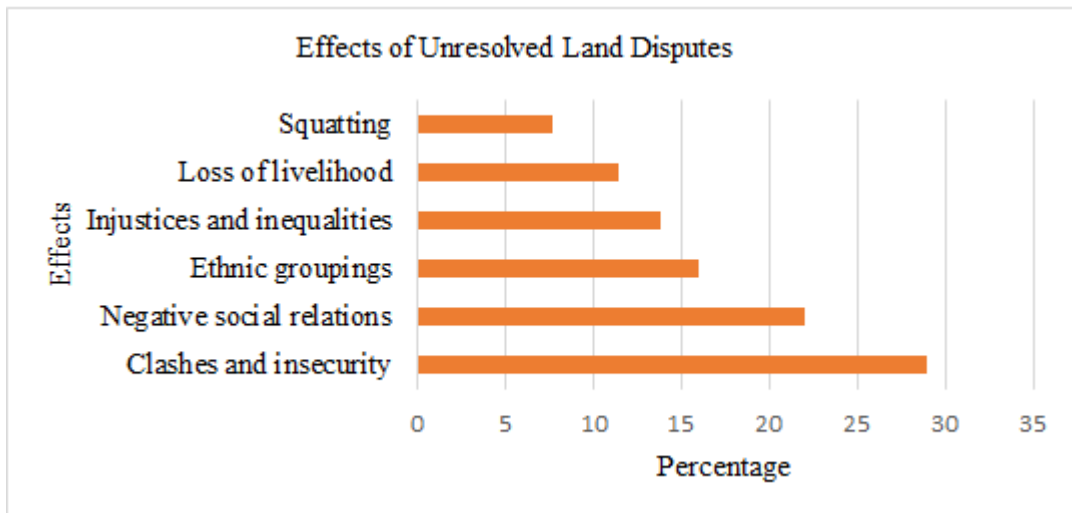


Fig 1:- Effects of Unresolved Land Disputes
 Source: Field Research (2019)

The results indicates that 28.77% of the respondents consider clashes and insecurity as the leading effects of unresolved historical land tenure disputes; followed by negative social relations at 21.99%, ethnic groupings at 16.05%, injustices and inequalities at 13.82%, loss of land and livelihood at 11.44% and squatting at 7.73%. Clashes and insecurity are the results of conflict that degenerate to violence since 1992 Maela and Molo clashes, Olunguruone, Njoro and Molo clashes in 1997, Kuresoi and Molo clashes and the 2007/8 Post Election Violence (PEV). The most indicting thing in all these clashes is that they all happen in the advent of general elections, thereby confirming the political imprint in land conflicts. In essence, these

conflicts consequently polarize the relational gap between existing communities in Nakuru County. Their recurrence of these conflicts has an historical bearing on contributory factors discussed.

B. Deployed Land Tenure Systems

Land Tenure Systems are critical in assessing how government policies on land blend with other dimensions in areas with land conflicts. The second study objective endeavoured to establish the implications of deployed Land Tenure systems on social cohesion in Nakuru County. The land tenure systems practiced by the respondents are indicated in the Figure 2 below:

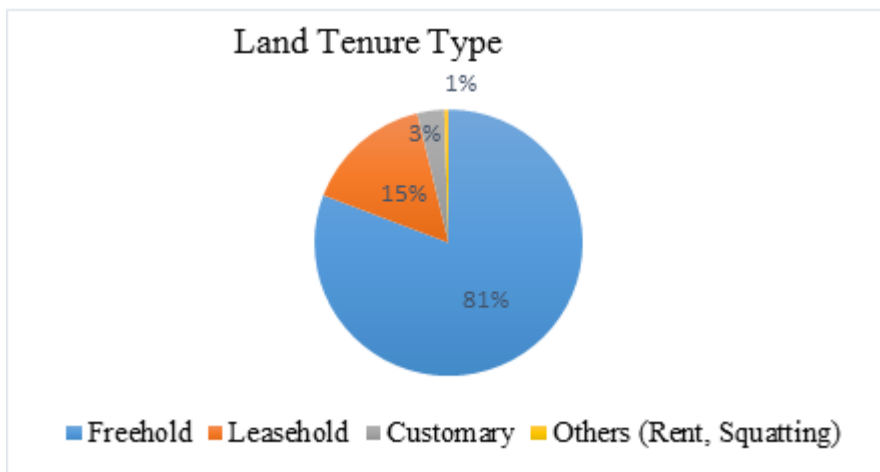


Fig 2:- Land Tenure Type in Nakuru County
 Source: Field Research (2019)

The Figure indicates that majority of the respondents, 81.00%, hold Freehold Tenure to the land they occupy while those on leasehold are 15.00%, those who have customary tenure are at 3.00% while others including rent and squatters were at 1.00%. The implications of this finding is that most of the residents of the area have absolute ownership to the land they occupy. This is in agreement with Waiganjo and Ngugi, (2001) who found out that the statutory land tenure was the dominant tenure system practiced in Kenya. The respondents were then asked to indicate whether the land tenure system they practice provides security and stability for their land and Figure 3 indicates the results.

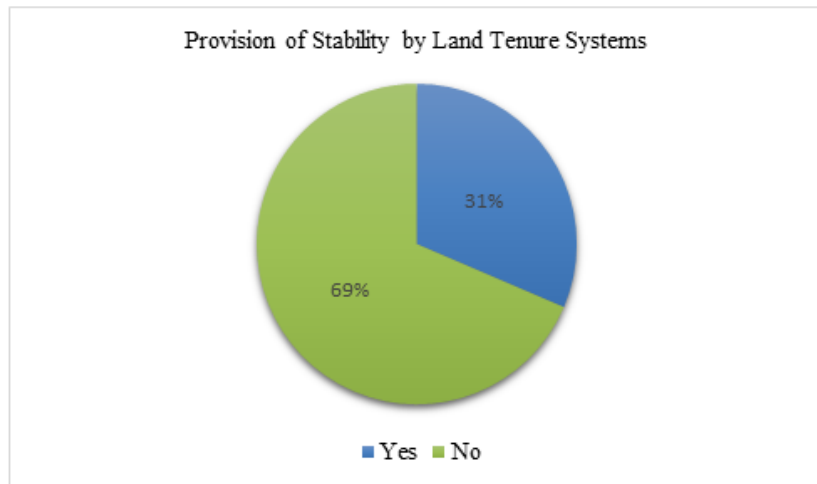


Fig 3:- Land Tenure and Social Stability
Source: Field Research (2019)

From the figure above, majority of the respondents, (69%) feel that the deployed land tenure systems do not provide security and stability to land owners, while 31% of the study participants indicated that they do provide security and stability. These percentages are confirmed by a key informant from interview schedule who stated:

We have Title Deeds as prove of ownership as required by the law. I remember one time the minister of lands in the Kibaki regime Mr. (Amos) Kimunya told us that a Title Deed is just a piece of paper and that is just what it has turned to be. Even though the land we occupy is our heritage from our ancestors, since 2008, the caveat put by the government that we cannot sell the land, has rendered land tenure and ownership documents useless.

The caveat resulted to tribal politics, negative ethnicity, encroachment to conservation areas, peoples' inability to adhere to land ownership laws, among other factors. Those affected expressed that they cannot invest in the lands since they are not sure of their security and investment thereby adversely affecting their socio-economic fabric. During the discussions with the five FGDs, the groups were unanimous that land tenure systems

in Nakuru County do not provide envisioned security and stability to land, hence a source of conflicts, with one discussant stating:

There is no guarantee that we shall continue occupying the land we own. So we cannot sustain the argument that having a Title Deed is the key to having a secure and stable land ownership. If that is true, we would not have lost our land in Mau Forest since it has the documents. I think we are at the mercy of the government since they control the policies and do not involve us.

Therefore, deployed land tenure systems do not provide necessary security and stability in the land sector, hence a trigger factor that can lead to or catalyze land conflicts.

C. Challenges facing Secure Land Ownership in Nakuru County

The third objective sought to evaluate the challenges faced by the affected communities in acquiring secure land ownership that affect social cohesion in the study area. The respondents were requested to indicate whether they own land in the area, and the findings are indicated in Figure 4.

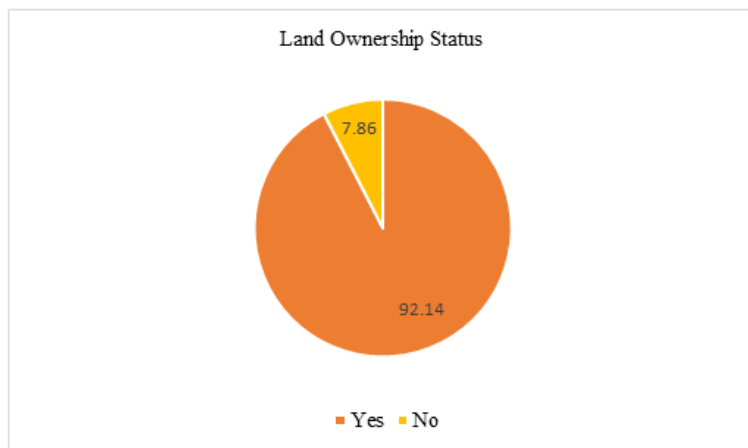


Fig 4:- Land Ownership Status
Source: Field Research (2019)

Figure 4 shows that majority of the respondents, 92.14% owned land while 7.59% did not own any land. Those who did not own any land can be associated to those who embrace the Customary Land Tenure system, squatters and those who rented land. The participants were also asked to indicate the size of land they owned and the following are the results



Fig 5:- Land Owned
 Source: Field Research (2019)

The findings indicate that majority of the respondents, 37.94%, own 3-5 acres of land, while those with less than three acres were 35.59%, those with 6-10 acres were 17.06% and those with land above 10 acres were 6.88%. This implies that most of the respondents 73.53% were small scale farmers. This corresponds to the finding of a study by FARMUP (2015) from Egerton University which found out that land owners in Nakuru had an average of 3.48 acres, an indicator that majority practised small scale farming, their source of livelihood and would do anything to defend it, as indicated by a key informant in an interview:

The little land I own is my only source of livelihood and my family depend on it for food, education and all other basic necessities. I bought the land and I will protect it by all means, from encroachers, those who would claim it and from herders who leave their animals to roam and destroy the crops. During elections people usually hire vigilante groups in this area to protect their property since it is a time when people turn against each other.

These sentiments were also expressed by discussants in all the five FGDs, who indicated that people will do everything possible to protect their farms, including hiring armed vigilant groups to protect their property when there are conflicts. The net effect of this move is that it exacerbates land conflicts. This is backed up by Yamano and Deininger (2005) who found out that conflict in Rift Valley, Nakuru County included, intensified with the presence of vigilant groups who are hired by individuals and communities to protect property and to fight when there is violence.

Possession of documents, especially Title Deed or Certificate of Lease, is a legal proof of ownership of the land by the one who possesses it (Land Act, 2012). Those who possess these documents are perceived to have a sense of security for the land they own since it is legally safeguarded. The participants were, therefore, asked to indicate whether they possessed any legal ownership documents and 81%, and had ownership documents while 19% did not possess any form of land ownership documents. The respondents were asked the type of documents they possessed and Figure 6 indicates the results.

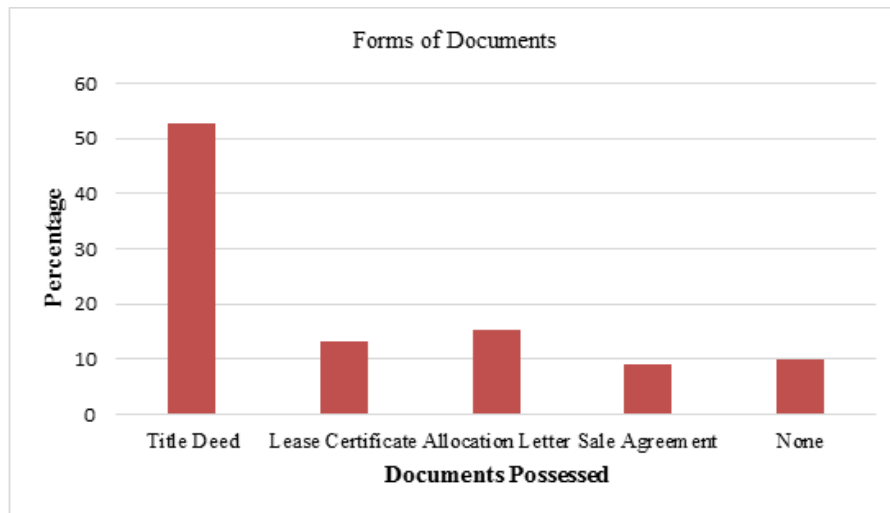


Fig 6:- Types of Ownership Documents
 Source: Field Research (2019)

The above figure reveals that 52.57% of the respondents, were in possession of Title Deeds, 15.18% were in possession of Allocation Letters, 13.28% had Lease Certificates, 8.94% had Sale Agreements while 10.03% did not have any documents. Land Act (2012) identifies Title Deeds and Certificate of Lease as legal proof of ownership and can only be revoked by a Court of Law if found to have been acquired fraudulently. This means that 65.85% of those who possess legal documents for the land they occupied are the right owners of the land. The findings are in tandem with the Nakuru County Government (2013), which states that about 72.5% of land in the County had Title Deeds. However, when asked whether the possession of the documents make them secure on the land they occupied, majority, 63.14% indicated that it does not make them feel secure while 36.86% indicated that the documents gave them security. This is exemplified by a key

informant in an interview who lost his land during the 2007/8 PEV who stated:

As long as the land issue continues to be a tool for political mobilization and erratic violence, there can never be security provided by these documents. Prior to the 2007 elections I had a Tittle Deed for my 3-acre piece of land but when the violence erupted after the elections, my property was burnt and I had to flee together with my family for my safety. I still have the Title Deed but the fear of what I witnessed prevents me from returning to the land.

Having established that possession ownership documents do not necessarily provide security for their land, the respondents were asked to name challenges that impede secure land ownership and the following are the results.

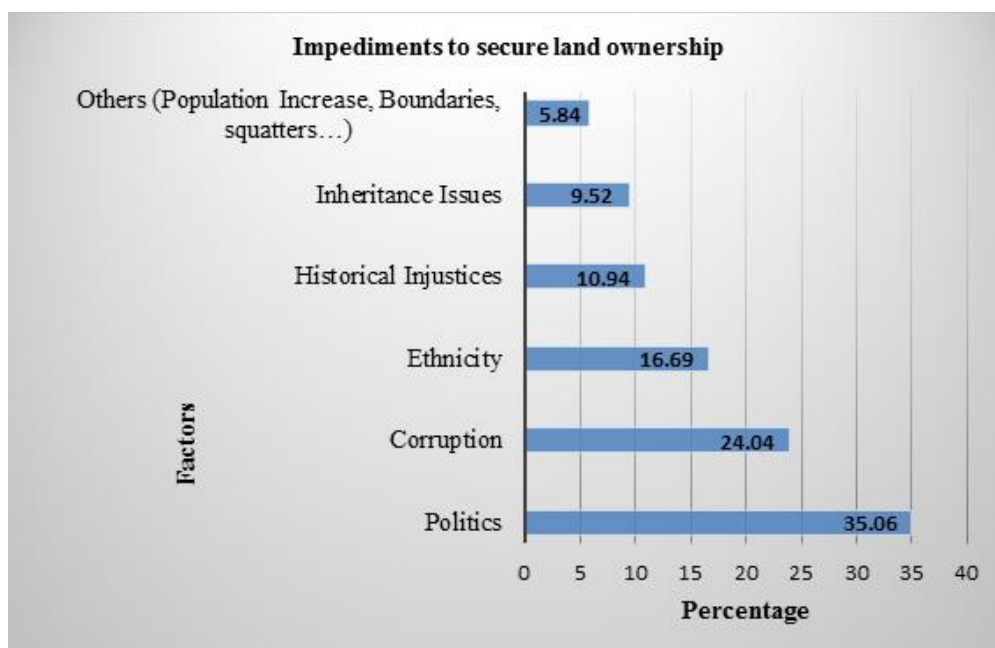


Fig 7:- Impediments to secure land ownership
 Source: Field Research (2019)

The respondents identified politics as a major cause of insecure land ownership at 35.06%, corruption at 24.04%, negative ethnicity at 14.69%, historical land injustices at 10.84%, inheritance issues at 9.52% while other factors such as boundary disputes, population increase, squatting, constituted about 5.84%. The findings are in tandem with Syagga (2013) and Shongolo (2009) who also identified these factors as triggers to incessant land conflicts and which must be addressed to ensure stability in the land sector. This is emphasized by a key informant from Naivasha in the interview schedule who stated:

During the PEV, I lost my property and forced to flee my home because of my ethnic background. I lost my son during the violence and I regret why I settled in the area. I had documents to show that the land I occupied was mine, but non-locals were not needed. Though I returned to my home, I know there is no security of the land I own here because politics and negative ethnicity reign.

Having established the challenges of secure land ownership in Nakuru County, the participants were also asked to name the effects of insecure land ownership and they identified the following, as indicated in Figure 8.

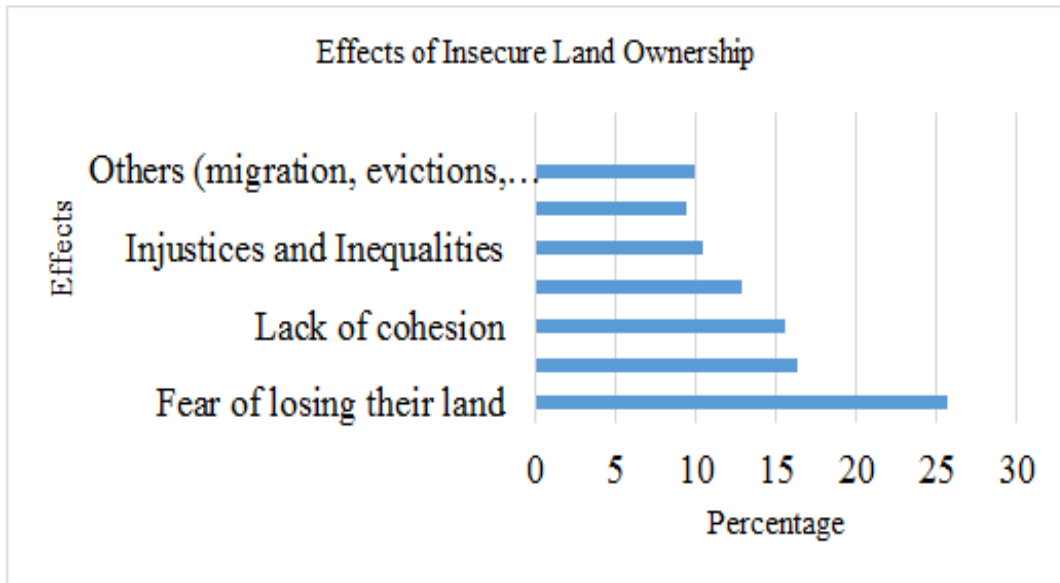


Fig 8:- Effects of Insecure Land Ownership
 Source: Field Research (2019)

Figure 8 shows that most of respondents identify fear of loss of land as the leading effect of insecure land ownership at 25.65%, clashes and insecurity at 16.27%, lack of cohesion at 15.56%, political tensions at 12.83%, injustices and inequalities at 10.45% while 9.35% identify low land productivity. These findings correspond to Kamanthe (2011) who, in his research, identified loss of lives and land, inequalities, incessant tensions as the most immediate effects of land conflicts. When the land is not secure, there will also be lack of stability leading to conflicts with attendant implication to social cohesion in the County. When there is secure land, there will be stability leading to peaceful coexistence devoid of political, social and economic tensions, in tandem with entitlement theory guiding this research.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the discussion of the study findings, it can be concluded that there are four main determinants of land conflicts in Nakuru County which continue to undermine the realization of secure and stable land ownership, hence affecting social cohesion negatively. These are corruption, negative ethnicity, divisive politics and historical land injustices. Without addressing these issues, land conflicts

are likely to persist, with negative impact to social cohesion.

For recommendations, this study takes cognizance of the efforts by Kenyan government to address historical land injustices, however, the public has not been sufficiently involved in finding a lasting solution to the problem, hence the need for greater and sincere public involvement. Secondly, divisive politics and negative ethnicity were identified as key triggers of land conflicts. The study, therefore, proposes the promulgation of appropriate laws that criminalize ethnic profiling and polarization and be enforced. Those inciting members of the public to be judged and if found guilty be prosecuted as well as enforcement of the code of ethic for the political class enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution. Thirdly, corruption was identified as a major threat to secure land ownership that contribute to land conflicts. The study recommends Enhancement of the fight against corruption in the institutions within the government and the larger society. Fourthly, the study recommends the safeguarding of land rights and to ensure access and effective service delivery in land administration and registration.

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