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The Kilosa Killings: Political Ecology of a Farmer–Herder Conflict in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Farmer–herder conflicts in Africa are often presented as being driven by 'environmental scarcity'. Political ecologists, however, argue that these conflicts should be analysed within a broader historical and policy context. This article presents a case study of a local conflict in the Kilosa District in Tanzania that tragically culminated in the killing of thirty-eight farmers on 8 December 2000. To understand the conflict, the authors argue that it is necessary to study the history of villagization and land use in the District, as well as national land tenure and pastoral policies. Attempts at agricultural modernization have fostered an anti-pastoral environment in Tanzania. The government aim is to confine livestock keeping to 'pastoral villages', but these villages lack sufficient pastures and water supplies, leading herders to search for such resources elsewhere. Pastoral access to wetlands is decreasing due to expansion of cultivated areas and the promotion of agriculture. The main tool that pastoralists still possess to counteract this trend is their ability to bribe officials. But corruption further undermines people's trust in authorities and in the willingness of these authorities to prevent conflicts. This leads actors to try to solve problems through other means, notably violence.

INTRODUCTION

The biblical story of the conflict between Cain and Abel, which led the former to kill the latter, is the archetypal example of the tension between sedentary farmers and migrating pastoralists.[1] Although historically there has also been complementarity and mutual benefits between these two groups, today this complementarity has in many parts of Africa been replaced by competition,

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1. 'Pastoralists' are livestock keepers who herd their animals, in contrast to a ranch system where animals are kept within a fenced farm unit. For the purpose of this article, we use the terms 'herder' and 'pastoralist' interchangeably.

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due to population growth and agricultural policies. Faced with the expansion of agriculture and a modern state that does not appreciate mobile livestock keeping as a valid way of life or production system, African pastoralists tend to be the losing party (Hesse and MacGregor, 2006; Little, 1992; Thébaud and Batterbury, 2001).

Pastoralists have, since the colonial period, been perceived by authorities and development organizations in Africa as unproductive (they do not contribute to national economies), unorganized (they 'roam around') and environmentally destructive (they cause overgrazing and desertification). The main solution proposed has been sedentarization and making resource use more 'legible' (Scott, 1998) by confining this use to certain defined areas. National legislation of modern African states tends to favour agriculture, which leaves a visible trace in the landscape as evidence of land use, while pastoral use is more invisible and therefore cannot easily be used to justify prioritized access or property rights. Farmers also have the advantage of being present, while pastoralists tend to be absent for parts of the year. Since use rights are granted to those who clear the land and add 'productive value' to it, pastoralists have difficulties policing their rights; farmer–herder conflicts[2] can be seen as the result.

Such conflicts in Africa are often presented as typical examples of resource conflicts in line with the influential 'environmental scarcity' literature (Baechler, 1998; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Kahl, 2006). The idea that increased environmental scarcity is driving violent conflicts has formed a powerful narrative in both academic and policy debates since the early 1990s (Peluso and Watts, 2001). Scarcity is believed to be rapidly increasing in many marginal environments due to ongoing processes of environmental degradation driven by population growth. The influence of the scarcity narrative was demonstrated by the decision to award the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize to Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In its justification for the award, the Nobel Committee referred to the Darfur conflict between herders and farmers as a 'climate war' linking climate change, environmental degradation and violence.[3]

However, as noted by Bassett (1988: 455) in his study of farmer–herder conflicts in the Ivory Coast, a 'weakness of human ecological analyses of peasant–herder conflicts is their failure to address sufficiently the politics of land use'. Bassett instead proposes to study these conflicts within a political ecology framework, which implies viewing farmer–herder conflicts as

2. Since these conflicts take many different forms, it is important to disaggregate the notion of 'conflict'. In the words of Hussein et al. (1999: 399), 'the umbrella term "conflict" has been used to cover tension between resource users, straightforward arguments between individuals, disputes between individuals or groups, or with the state, legal proceedings between resource users, political action to evict certain resource users, theft, raiding of livestock, beatings, killing of humans or livestock, and large-scale violence between groups involving multiple killings'.
3. See http://nobelpeaceprize.org/eng_lect_2007a.html (accessed 16 January 2008).

'responses in context'. Based on studies of such conflicts in Niger and Mali, Turner (2004) also proposes political ecology as an alternative approach to the scarcity narrative, stressing that conflicts between farmers and herders should be understood as more than just resource conflicts. Moritz (2006), who has carried out fieldwork in Cameroon, criticizes political ecology studies in Africa for not paying enough attention to politics. In particular, Moritz calls for an explicit linking of political ecology with the study of corruption. Following up on this, Benjaminsen and Ba (2009) studied the role of policy and corruption in explaining a farmer–herder conflict in the inland delta of the Niger river in Mali.

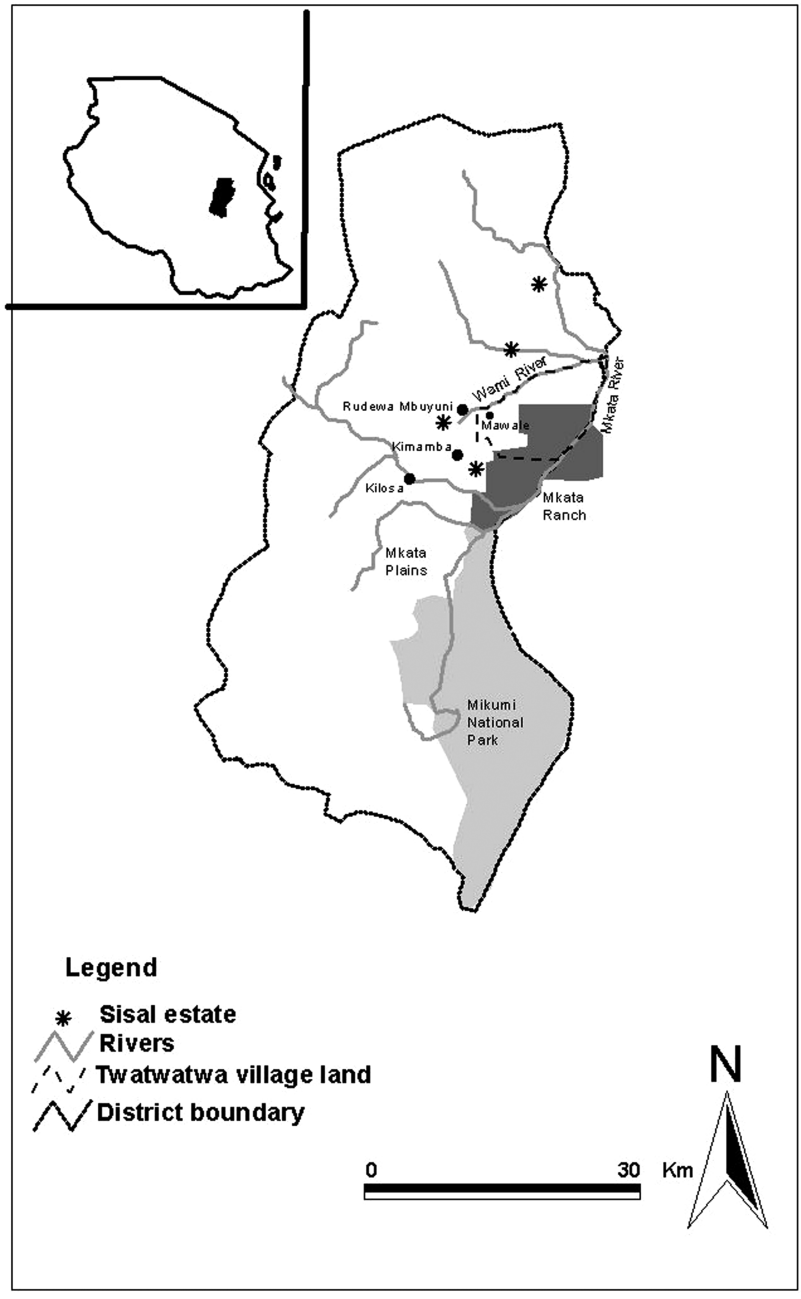
Current political ecology usually has a focus on power relations in land and environmental management at various geographical levels, from the local via the national to the global, and on the interlinkages between these levels. There is a particular interest in the globalization of environmental discourses and the ways that power relations are reinforced in hegemonic discourses (Adger et al., 2001; Forsyth, 2003; Peet and Watts, 1996; Robbins, 2004; Stott and Sullivan, 2000). Environmental struggles and conflicts are seen as inseparable struggles over meanings and material assets (Brosius, 1999).

Political ecology studies of resource conflicts often involve single case studies set within a wider context of political economy (for example, Le Billon, 2001), although cases can be framed at various levels, from the local to the national and beyond. In this article, we present a detailed case study of a local conflict between farmers and pastoralists from two neighbouring villages in the Kilosa District in Tanzania (see Figure 1). We use the study of this local conflict to further investigate the role of history, discourses, national policies and legislation, and local politics in explaining such a conflict. The conflict culminated in the killing of thirty-eight farmers in Rudewa Mbuyuni village on 8 December 2000 and has been highly publicized in the daily press in Tanzania, where it became known as 'the Kilosa Killings'.[4] It is frequently presented as a clear-cut resource conflict between the farming interests of Rudewa Mbuyuni, and the pastoralists in the neighbouring village of Twatwatwa with their need to access water and grazing in the dry season. We argue, however, that this incident was more than a resource conflict driven by increasing scarcity. In order to understand the conflict, it is also necessary to take political factors into account, such as policies related to land tenure, livestock keeping and the villagization process of the 1970s.

Fieldwork was carried out during several visits to Kilosa District in 2006 and 2007. We collected data on livestock, population and land use from the District administration. Rainfall data were obtained from the Ilonga agricultural research station about 20 km from Kilosa town. We conducted interviews with District officials (District Executive Officer, District Agricultural

4. A number of newspaper articles on this incident have been collected in a folder in the East Africana section of the main library at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Figure 1. Kilosa District



and Livestock Officer and his assistant, District Conflict Documentation Officer), the District Police Officer (in addition to informal conversations with several police officers), the District Magistrate and his assistant, a senior ecologist of Mikumi National Park, the Managing Director of the National Ranching Company (NARCO) as well as the Ranch Manager and Assistant Ranch Manager of the nearby NARCO ranch, and the previous Member of Parliament from Kilosa. We also studied records in the District Magistrate's office for the last ten years of court cases on farmer–herder conflicts, as well as police records of reported conflicts. For descriptions of past cases of land evictions, we consulted archival records at the National Archives in Dar es Salaam. In addition, we carried out two focus group interviews in each community with men and women representing 6–8 per cent of the adult population in the two villages. These interviews were semi-structured and focused on development constraints as well as causes of the conflict. We also recorded one long in-depth group interview in Swahili in each community. These interviews were carried out without following a strict format: they were conversations focusing on the conflict and its causes in which interviewees were free to give their opinions and versions of events. The group of farmers in Rudewa Mbuyuni who were present at this interview consisted of the village Chairman and Village Executive Officer and ten victims of the attack. The interview with the herders in Twatwatwa was primarily with the former Village Chairman and eight to ten Maasai warriors (*morans*) who were listening in. This interviewing technique tends to produce the 'official' story from the parties involved. Both these interviews were later transcribed and translated to English.

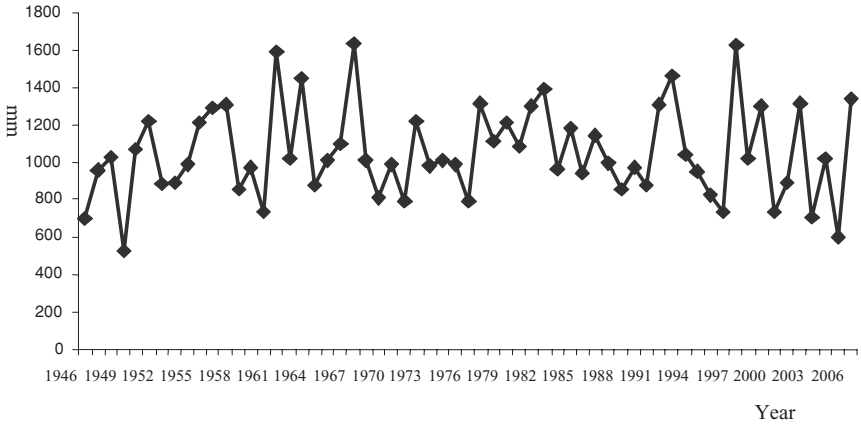
The next section gives some background to land use in Kilosa District and in the local case study area. Thereafter, we present the farmers' and the herders' stories about the conflict. As such conflicts need to be understood within a historical, social and economic setting, we move on to discuss the Tanzanian pastoral policy discourse, including a brief review of national policies and laws relevant to agricultural and pastoral development. Finally, before concluding, we discuss factors influencing the access and control of the contested wetlands in the study area.

LAND USE IN KILOSA DISTRICT AND THE CONFLICT AREA

Background

Kilosa is situated on one of the old East African caravan routes that extended from Bagamoyo via Mpwapwa, Tabora and Ujiji to the eastern part of today's Congo (Kimambo and Temu, 1969). In the nineteenth century, these towns were among the major 'slave calling stations' that served as safe places for caravans to rest and replenish their supplies. Today, Kilosa District covers

Figure 2. Annual Rainfall in Kilosa, 1946–2006



Source: Ilonga Agricultural Research Station

14,265 km^2, has a population of about half a million,[5] and is one of six districts in Morogoro Region. The population comprises a large number of ethnic groups including the Kaguru, Sagara, Vidunda, Parakuyo Maasai, Barabaig, Gogo and Sukuma. Rainfall varies substantially from year to year. Figure 2 depicts these variations for the period 1946–2006. The rain falls in two periods of the year — the short rains in November and December and the long rains from mid-February through April.

In contrast to the sisal production era in the 1960s and 1970s, the wage economy in the District is presently not well developed. There are still a few sisal estates and cotton farms operating, but the level of employment is insignificant when compared to small-scale farming and livestock production. In addition to producing for their own needs, farmers sell their crops either at village level or in Kilosa town. Kilosa District also has eight livestock markets, each one taking place on a specific day of the month. The customers are usually from Morogoro and Dar es Salaam.

The District is often referred to in government and development aid reports and in national newspaper articles as an area of land scarcity and conflicts. Several structural factors have contributed to the scarcity. First, a number of estate farms for sisal production were established in the colonial period through the allocation of large areas of indigenous land to European settler farmers. The Germans introduced sisal plantations in the area in the 1890s (Koponen, 1994) and the establishment of sisal estates continued during

5. This implies a population density of about 35/km^2. The population size has increased from 193,810 in 1967, to 274,544 in 1978 and 436,575 in 1988 to 476,493 in 2002, according to the official population census. This gives an annual growth rate of 2.9 per cent from 1988 to 2002.

British rule. By the 1930s, land conflicts between European settlers and African communities were noticeable (Illife, 1979). Second, these estates attracted a number of immigrant workers from other regions of the country who subsequently settled in the area. Many of the villages in and around the existing and former sisal estates consist of former estate workers and their descendants. Third, conservation areas cover almost one third of the District's total area. In 1964, Mikumi National Park was established, which today covers 3,230 km^2 or 22.7 per cent of the District. Forest reserves cover a further 7.4 per cent of the District. Fourth, evictions in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, following the establishment of large-scale agricultural development schemes in the north, such as the Basuto Wheat Scheme in Hanang, caused in-migrations of especially Barabaig pastoralists towards the south and into the District (Brehony et al., 2003).[6]

The sisal estates have played and still play a central role in the dynamics around access to land in Kilosa District. In 1967, the sisal estates were nationalized, but in the 1970s and 1980s many of these estates were closed down due to competition from artificial fibre. Following the introduction of economic liberalization in Tanzania in the early 1990s (Neumann, 1995), the government privatized the few estates that had survived in Kilosa, and today only four of the many estates that had existed are still producing sisal. The other estates have been allocated to the District Council or to neighbouring villages and have been taken over by small-scale farming and livestock herding.

From the late 1960s, the villagization programme (*Operation Vijiji*) was implemented in Tanzania. It aimed at the modernization of traditional agriculture through the resettlement of the rural population in concentrated Ujamaa villages (Hodgson, 2001; Kikula, 1996; Scott, 1998). As elsewhere in the country, Ujamaa villagization also had a large impact on settlement patterns in Kilosa District, although the sedentary village involved in the particular conflict studied here is not an Ujamaa village.

In 1999, the Land Ordinance of 1923, the principal governing land law in Tanzania, was repealed and replaced by two pieces of legislation, the Land Act of 1999 and the Village Land Act of 1999. These new laws divided land into three categories: General Land, Reserve Land and Village Land. General Land is governed by the Land Act directly under the Commissioner for Lands. Reserve Land is managed under bodies set up for these areas (Forest Reserves, for example, are governed by the Forest Act of 2002); and Village Land is governed by the Village Land Act and is under the administration of Village Councils. These councils have to administer land in accordance with customary law, which means any rule that is established by usage and accepted as custom by the community (Wily, 2003). In Kilosa District the

6. Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists from northern Tanzania moving with livestock into southern parts of the country have been discussed by Brockington (2006), Charnley (1997) and Coppolillo (2000).

confusion about who has the right to use certain areas is aggravated by non-revocation of titles to many of the abandoned sisal estates. Hence, it is unclear whether these estates should be managed as General Land or Village Land. Because of this confusion, the result of the privatization policy of the early 1990s, the former estates have become sites of new land use conflicts. These conflicts might be between individual farmers, between farmers and pastoralists, or between the former owners and the present users.

In the 1990s, two more pastoral villages were founded in Kilosa District giving the pastoralists eight of a total of 164 registered villages in the District. These eight villages have village certificates implying that boundaries have been surveyed and mapped, but most of the pastoral villages lack basic services such as health clinics, schools and cattle dips. There are currently sixty-five dispensaries for the 164 villages in the District: none of these clinics are in the eight pastoral villages. In addition, while there are 1.26 primary schools per farming village, there are only 0.75 primary schools per pastoral village. The numbers for secondary schools are 0.24 and 0.13 respectively.[7] Most of the pastoral villages have been located in bushland infested with tse-tse flies and ticks. *Trypanosomiasis* caused by tse-tse flies and tick-borne diseases such as East Coast Fever remain a huge problem for pastoral production in the area, leading to loss of productivity and high mortality rates in livestock (KDRDP and Irish Aid, 1997).

According to a number of historical sources (including Beidelman, 1967; Iliffe, 1979; Moffett, 1958), at the time of colonization the occupants of a large part of the area covered today by Kilosa District were the Kaguru and Sagara. In fact this area was referred to as Ukaguru and Usagara (the land of the Kaguru and the Sagara). Other sources note the historical presence of the Parakuyo in the area (Beidelman, 1960; Sayers, 1930). According to Beidelman (1962), one of the core areas of the Parakuyo has long been the northern part of Kilosa District. In the nineteenth century, the Parakuyo were pushed southwards from the Maasai Plains by the Kisongo Maasai (Galaty, 1988, 1993; Hurskainen, 1990). According to Beidelman (1960), this movement southwards started before 1840.

Beidelmann (1960) also reported increasing farmer–pastoral tensions in the Mkata Plains in the 1950s. The rise in the number of such conflicts led the local government, in the mid-1970s, to establish six pastoral villages assigned basically for the Parakuyo who are the main pastoral group in the District. Mtwale (2002) also notes that between 1945 and 1960 there were several skirmishes between Kaguru farmers and Parakuyo pastoralists in Kilosa District, but the first serious encounter between the two groups took place in 1967 when swords, spears and machetes were used, and many people were killed.

Despite the designation of special pastoral villages, conflicts with farmers, both non-violent and violent, have continued and perhaps increased in

7. Data from the education department in the District.

Table 1. Number of Farmer–Herder Conflicts in Kilosa District

Year	Cases reported to the police	Cases forwarded to the magistrate	Number of cases to court	Number of convictions
1997	Not available	Not available	6	One convicted to 2 years in prison
1998	Not available	Not available	2	Both convicted to fines; one also to compensation
1999	Not available	Not available	6	Two convicted to compensation
2000	55	27	13	One convicted to compensation
2001	39	22	15	Six convicted to fines; two convicted to prison (2 and 3 years); one boy of 12 years convicted to 12 strokes
2002	43	18	6	Two convicted without information on the sentence; two convicted to compensation
2003	57	29	28	Three convicted to compensation
2004	45	15	23	One convicted to 6 months in prison; two sentenced to 12 months; three convicted to compensation
2005	59	23	4	One convicted to compensation

Source: Data from Kilosa Police and the District Magistrate's Office.

number (Table 1). Two causes of these conflicts are, first, that the land areas allocated to the pastoralists are not large enough, leading herders to search for pasture and water outside pastoral village areas; and, second, that cultivated areas in wetlands have been extended. In 2001, the district authorities established a by-law that limits pastoral use to the designated pastoral villages. Five livestock routes have been defined that should be followed when moving cattle to markets. Anyone breaking this by-law is liable to a fine of Tsh 100,000 (approximately US$ 100) or one year in prison.

The Case Study Area

While the contested area in this case study lies adjacent to a sisal estate, it is located on Village Land, on the flood plain of the upper Wami River. This land is cultivated by farmers from Rudewa Mbuyuni village, which has about 2,750 inhabitants from various ethnic groups and lies 25 km from Kilosa town. Until 1999, maize, cassava and other rainfed crops were grown on the flood plain, but that year the villagers started using water from the river to irrigate rice fields by gravity. Now that it can be harvested twice a

year, rice has become the main crop in the village. The area cultivated under this system had increased to about 360 ha in 2007.

The Wami River runs through the Mkata Plains, a large savanna area dominated by Acacia woodland, and meets up with the Mkata River (see Figure 1). The flood plain of the upper Wami River is also an attractive dry season area for livestock keepers, since it is relatively free of tse-tse flies (Galaty, 1988). The neighbouring Parakuyo Maasai community of Twatwatwa depends on access to the Wami River and nearby grazing lands during the dry season (July–October). This pastoral community consists of about 3,500 inhabitants. In 1997, people in Twatwatwa owned about 31,300 cattle, 2,800 goats and 5,500 sheep (KDRDP and Irish Aid, 1997). According to the agricultural service in the District, the Twatwatwa village land, which covers 30,830 ha, has a carrying capacity of only 5,080 head of cattle. Hence, if herders in Twatwatwa were to adapt their livestock numbers to the 'carrying capacity', they would have to reduce cattle numbers to about one-sixth of the 1997 numbers (without counting small stock). One can only imagine what consequences this would have for local livelihoods.

While the Parakuyo are specialized pastoralists (Galaty, 1988; Hurskainen 1990), farmers in Rudewa hardly keep any livestock — just eleven stall-fed cows and eighty-four goats according to village records.[8] Like most pastoral Maasai, the Parakuyo have a permanent base and, like many African pastoralists, they practise a flexible herding system implying that herders (usually young men) leave the village territory with most of the livestock (except young calves and milking cows) to look for pastures during parts of the dry season.

The nearby Mkata State Ranch started as a veterinary research station in 1956 and was handed over to the National Ranching Company (NARCO) after independence. One of the main aims of NARCO ranches in Tanzania, in addition to increasing the national production of beef, was 'to demonstrate and disseminate modern ranching techniques to traditional herders'.[9] In 2005, the ranch was privatized. Almost half of the total area of 61,528 ha was divided into seven blocks of about 4,000 ha each, and leased for thirty-three years to individuals at 200 Tsh per acre.[10] Four blocks of a total of 14,240 ha were allocated to the Parakuyo community, while 19,446 ha were kept by NARCO as a demonstration farm. The latter also provides a dipping service, against payment, to the other users. The demonstration farm

8. In the District as a whole in 2007, there were 215,000 head of cattle according to the district agricultural office. Two thirds of the cattle are owned by people in the eight designated pastoral villages. In addition, 40 per cent of the goats and 80 per cent of the sheep in the District are owned by people in these eight villages. The rest of the livestock are owned mostly by Sukuma agro-pastoralists, while a few farmers also own some small stock and cattle kept under zero-grazing. Livestock numbers are available for only two other years, 1984 and 2000, which had cattle numbers of 243,000 and 170,000 respectively.
9. Interview with the assistant manager at Mkata Ranch, 3 October 2006.
10. 1 ha = 2.47 acres.

is presently stocked at about 10 ha per head of cattle, which is well below the recommended carrying capacity.

The Twatwatwa village is situated on land that was originally allocated to the NARCO Ranch. While the ranch has a title deed issued in 1969 to this land, the village holds a village certificate to some of the same land dated 1994. This certificate is obviously contested by the ranch management, which claims that the pastoralists obtained it through bribing officials in the district land office. Nevertheless, the certificate appears to be acknowledged by the present local authorities.

A Local Overgrazing Narrative

There is a strong local narrative shared by farmers, politicians and local administrators, which claims that the main cause of farmer–herder conflicts in the District is that herders overgraze their own village land and subsequently enter the farmers' village territories to feed their ever-growing herds of livestock. In the words of one senior politician (who is also one of the individuals leasing a block from NARCO): 'The key point in the conflict between farmers and the Maasai is that the Maasai do not relate the number of their cattle to the grazing area available. . . . They should practise proper methods of animal husbandry, but their priority is to have as many animals as possible' (interview, 3 October 2006).

However, there is an alternative narrative shared by some government employees, that the main problem is lack of available services in the pastoral villages. Pastoralists pay taxes and should therefore have a right to these services, some government employees argue. Hence, the main solution proposed is that the government invest in dispensaries, schools, cattle dips and water points for the pastoralists, which would be the only way to get the Maasai to stay on their village land.

In the dominating local narrative, which we shall see is largely informed by the national discourse on pastoralism and livestock production, there are also frequent references to overgrazing and general environmental degradation in Kilosa District caused by pastoral use, and calls for the pastoralists to destock and adhere to the carrying capacity of the range. For instance, one senior NARCO official told us: 'The Maasai should destock and stick to the carrying capacity. Otherwise they will destroy the whole area' (interview, 23 May 2007). However, few studies of environmental change in the District have been undertaken and the evidence on environmental degradation is inconclusive. KDRDP and Irish Aid (1997) carried out a rapid rangeland assessment and could not clearly demonstrate any overgrazing. Instead the report said:

> The populations of both pastoralists and their herds are thought to have increased over the past ten years and some observers even suggest that there is overgrazing in the rangelands. Is this part of a nationwide theme of misconceptions about pastoralists or is it true for Kilosa?

> Neither herd size nor patterns of change in herds have been documented . . . no study of their movements and their needs for water, grazing and human and livestock services has been made. (KDRDP and Irish Aid, 1997: 95)

The study did, however, find some bush and tree encroachment in rangelands. Kisoza (2007), studying satellite images from 1975, 1991 and 2000, also concluded that considerable bush encroachment had taken place through the transformation of grasslands to shrubland. However, this process seems to have been more marked in the period 1975–1991 than during 1991–2000. In the latter period, open grasslands actually increased.

THE CONFLICT

The main event in this conflict took place in Rudewa Mbuyuni village at around 5 a.m. on 8 December 2000 when a number of Maasai warriors attacked the village, killed thirty-eight villagers and wounded many others. As a result of this tragic event, the Kilosa District Commissioner was sacked and the Police Commander of Kilosa District was demoted and transferred. A number of Maasai *morans* and elders were arrested. Some were kept in prison for up to one and a half years and one Maasai died in prison. However, none was tried in court. The Prime Minister's Office set up a commission to investigate the conflict. Among its key recommendations was that the government and the ruling party CCM should 'educate pastoralists in the country to stop their nomadic life' (*The Guardian*, 2001).

In trying to understand the background of this incident, we recorded and transcribed group interviews with actors on both sides of the conflict.[11] In the following, we present excerpts of the stories told by the two sides, which we believe speak to each other.

The Farmers' Story[12]

Elder 1: In 1975, Rudewa village was registered as a normal traditional village not an Ujamaa village. Most of the inhabitants were indigenous Sagara and Kaguru, but some were also people who had moved from elsewhere in Tanzania to work on the sisal estate. People were farmers. They did not have much livestock, just a few goats. There were no problems in the village until the pastoralists arrived. That was in 1968. In the beginning, they came to the village without livestock, and most of them were elders. Without asking for permission, they settled in the periphery of the village. After some time, their children brought in livestock. Then they started to increase in numbers and to come to the village centre looking for food and services. After a while, they got government permission to settle at Twatwatwa, which is far from here. During periods of drought, they took their livestock to our farms without consulting us, sometimes destroying crops. When we reported this to the authorities, they just

11. The interviews were carried out in Swahili and later transcribed into English by one of the authors.
12. These interviews took place on 29 September 2006.

ignored it and no action was taken. So villagers stopped trusting the government. That is how the fighting began. The first violent incidence took place in 1979 when three people died.

Young man 1: In 2000, the influx of livestock increased and the herders did not respect farmers. Farms and crops continued to be destroyed by livestock. But when farmers reported incidences to the police, no action was taken. When livestock destroyed rice farms no compensation was paid to the farmers. Some people were injured with spears or *pangas*, but no compensation was paid. So the hostility increased between farmers and livestock keepers. The farmers decided to form a traditional militia group for self-defence known as *Sungusungu*. The role of the *Sungusungu* was to catch livestock invading farms and to bring these animals to the Ward Executive Office. Livestock owners should then report to the police and pay compensation for damage caused by livestock to get their animals back. Maasai youth then started to snatch back the livestock from the farmers. This led the farmers and livestock keepers to walk with guns and traditional weapons full time. The tension was increasing. . . . This village is close to the Wami river where people cultivate the flood plain even in the dry season. And the pastoralists take their livestock to the river to drink. Most villagers have plots for farming in this area. Rice, maize, cassava, beans, tomatoes, sugarcane and cabbage are all crops grown in this area.

Elder 2: One day cattle owned by one farmer were stolen by the Maasai. This man requested the *Sungusungu* to help him search for the cattle. Some Maasai left with the cattle, while others went around and re-entered the village. There was clearly a plan to lure the *Sungusungu* to follow the cattle, while the village was being attacked.

Elder 3: I woke up very early in the morning that day and went to my farm. While working in the field, I heard gun blasts. I returned quickly to my homestead to wake up my wife. Then I heard more gun fires. Suddenly, one young man came running and told me that the Maasai have invaded the village and are killing people. When I got out of the house I saw people running here and there and many houses were set on fire. I then started to run together with my family.

Elderly woman: Early in the morning I was on my way to fetch some water when I came across people who told me to run out of the village because Maasai are killing people. I didn't turn back, I started running with my fellows and when we reached the river I was not able to cross it. Then came three Maasai warriors. One shot me with an arrow in my leg and I removed it while they were looking at me. They then beat my head with wands until they were satisfied. I was seriously injured and couldn't walk. People came and brought me to the hospital.

Young man 2: The conflict still exists. Here in the village there is a reconciliation committee between farmers and livestock keepers. But the livestock keepers do not respect the borders. Cattle still graze on agricultural fields. Overgrazing is a serious problem in such a way that the existing reconciliation committee cannot work properly.

The Herders' Story[13]

Maasai elder: Most of us in Twatwatwa came from Gairo and Mfuru [in the northern parts of Kilosa District] in the 1960s. In 1963/64, the District authorities told us to move

13. The following quotes are from a group interview held on 2 October 2006 with the former village chairman of Twatwatwa and a number of *morans*. The elder did the talking.

from Twatwatwa because the place had too many cattle. Some then moved to Mawale [close to Rudewa], while others remained in Twatwatwa. Mawale is now a sub-village of Twatwatwa. Before Twatwatwa was registered as an independent village in 1977, we were a sub-village of Rudewa. But thereafter, Mawale decided to be part of Twatwatwa village. . . . During those years, the government used to give free veterinary medicine to kill pests. After privatization of the service, we now have to pay for this service. . . . We don't have enough water at Twatwatwa. Rivers are located very far. That's why we need more watering points. . . . The major cause of the conflict with the farmers is water. Farmers need water for irrigation of their fields, while we need it for our cattle. Therefore conflicts emerge when everyone wants to be near the river. Sometimes cattle destroy agricultural fields and conflicts begin.

That year (2000) was a general election year. The Ward Councillor promised the farmers, who were in the majority, that if he were re-elected he would make sure that the Maasai were evicted from the area. He was then elected, and the conflict between the farmers and the Maasai started. The farmers began to seize Maasai cattle when they saw them grazing near their farms even when there were no crops on the land. After seeing what was happening, the *morans* organized themselves and the fighting started. . . . Our *morans*, unlike the *Sungusungu*, cannot do anything without receiving orders from the elders. When cattle are stolen from the Maasai, the *morans* are supposed to fight until they get the cattle back. Corruption is another reason for the conflict. For instance, if my cattle are caught by farmers because they were found grazing in farms, they will be taken to the village office so that the farmer can get compensation. But, instead I can give money to the authorities to return the cattle to me without compensating the farmer.

On 5 December at around 8 pm we were sitting under a tree in Mawale when we were surrounded by people who started to beat us. They also set fire to our houses. In one of the houses, a man was injured by a knife. The next morning, the *morans* gathered and made plans for revenge.[14]

THE TANZANIAN PASTORAL POLICY DISCOURSE

From colonial times, the pastoral policy discourse in Tanzania has been largely influenced by modernization ideology viewing pastoralism as an unproductive and environmentally damaging relic of the past (Århem, 1985; Brockington and Homewood, 1996; Hodgson, 2001; Homewood and Rodgers, 1991; Mattee and Shem, 2006; Ndagala, 1990; Parkipuny, 1979; Raikes, 1981). It is thought that livestock keeping needs to be brought in line with modern development through land titling, enclosure of the commons and the establishment of permanent settlements. While government policies have encouraged farmers to expand their fields in order to make the country self-sufficient in food, pastoralists have been told to reduce livestock numbers to prevent overgrazing and soil erosion (Ndagala, 1990). As a consequence, livestock and range managers are trained to see growth in livestock as an unwanted development. For instance, a District livestock officer in Kilosa complained to us that livestock numbers were increasing,

14. It was naturally difficult to get the people of Twatwatwa to talk about the actual event of 8 December, since it was also the subject of a criminal investigation.

while in any other economic sector, 'growth' would usually be cause for celebration.

The policy discourse in Tanzania is illustrated by the following statements by President Kikwete quoted in an article in the Dar es Salaam daily, *The Guardian* (2006a):

> President Jakaya Kikwete has directed all government leaders in districts and regions affected by overstocking to resolve land disputes between herdsmen and farmers immediately. The President issued the directive when he opened a meeting of livestock keepers and farmers in Dodoma yesterday. He said the government wants to improve the livestock sector by creating awareness among pastoralists about the economic dangers posed by nomadic pastoralism. 'To implement this objective, I urge all district and regional authorities, especially in areas affected by overgrazing and overstocking, to apply modern livestock keeping methods, including setting aside special grazing land for livestock keepers', he said. He added: 'This is necessary if we want to attain sustainable use of land resources and avoid frequent clashes between livestock keepers and farmers'. The President also said that since livestock keeping depends on proper management of land resources, it was important to note that most land disputes were a result of mismanagement of land resources in nomadic pastoral areas. 'You have all witnessed this problem. There have been serious land disputes between farmers and pastoralists in Kilosa, Kilombero and Mbarali districts', he said.

Reviewing pastoral policies in Tanzania, Mattee and Shem (2006: 4) also cite President Kikwete saying: 'We are producing little milk, export very little beef, and our livestock keepers roam throughout the country with their animals in search for grazing grounds. We have to do away with archaic ways of livestock farming'.

Since independence, a number of development programmes aimed at improving the livelihoods of pastoralists have been initiated. Guided by modernization ideology, programmes have focused on settling pastoralists as the way to bring them improved services and economic opportunities (Ndagala, 1990). The main large-scale programme to modernize pastoralism in Tanzania was 'Operation Imparnati' (from *emparnat* meaning 'permanent habitation' in Maa) from the late 1970s, which was based on the idea that the Maasai were leading a nomadic life and that they should be settled (Ndagala, 1982). Operation Imparnati formed part of the Ujamaa villagization programme. However, 'as far as the Maasai were concerned, Ujamaa villagization proved to be a largely cosmetic exercise of rearranging relatively mobile homesteads around existing services' (Homewood, 1995: 337). Operation Imparnati implied the erection of homesteads in a large circle with various village services such as water supplies, dips, schools, veterinary services and dispensaries located in the centre. The primary economic activity was to be livestock and especially diary production, but some agriculture was also to be encouraged. According to Parkipuny (1979), these permanent villages, which were planned without consulting the beneficiaries, ended up concentrating livestock while hindering adequate pasture rotation.

More recently, the draft Livestock Policy (URT, 2005) has been guided by the modernization goals of encouraging 'the development of a

commercially oriented, efficient and internationally competitive livestock industry', while the communal and mobile system of exploiting range resources of pastoralists is condemned. The National Land Policy (1995), Land Act (1999) and Village Land Act (1999) further strengthen the idea of enclosing and registering village land in addition to opening it up for privatization of holdings. While this might be considered a positive development in many farming communities, it could lead to further obstacles for pastoralists who depend on flexibility in their natural resource management.

Since Tanzania adopted its Structural Adjustment programme in 1984, government support to pastoral communities has been reduced. This trend was further reinforced by the introduction of economic reforms (liberalization) from the early 1990s (Neumann, 1995). Examples of previous support include dips for control of ticks and tick-borne diseases and dams for watering livestock. Such projects today depend on cost-sharing arrangements or full cost recovery by beneficiaries.

A recent illustration of the official bias against pastoralists is the way herders have been blamed for the current power crisis in Tanzania. Livestock grazing in the catchment area of the Mtera dam is officially claimed to be causing a water shortage, while the biggest water consumers are the large-scale and smallholder rice farms situated upstream of the dam. According to *The Guardian* (2006b), a full-scale military operation was launched on 18 May 2006 to evict pastoralists from the Usangu Plains. A heavily armed contingent of regular police, anti-poaching units and game wardens cleared the Ihefu Wetland of hundreds of pastoralists with over 300,000 cattle. About 1,500 cattle were impounded and the owners were fined a total of Tshs 14,450,000 (about US$ 14,450). A number of civil society organizations have criticized the government for the forced evictions, describing it as an act against human rights (*The Guardian*, 2007).

The importance of such wetlands for pastoralists has been highlighted by, for example, Little (1992), Scoones (1991) and Woodhouse et al. (2000). These swamps contain productive pastures that herders depend on to sustain their livestock through the dry season. At the same time, agricultural policies in Tanzania, as in many other African countries, encourage the expansion of cultivated areas for purposes of food self-sufficiency at the expense of key dry season pastures. For pastoralists in Kilosa, access to wetlands is thus lost because of agricultural expansion.[15]

WHOSE WETLANDS?

Mawale, a hamlet within Twatwatwa village, is a small pastoral base that is situated close to Rudewa Mbuyuni village and the contested flood plain.

15. Igoe and Brockington (1999) document more generally the various ways in which pastoral land is lost in northern Tanzania.

A key factor in the conflict that led to the killings is a border dispute on this plain between the two communities. The pastoralists argue that farmers are extending their irrigated fields into the wetlands that lie on Twatwatwa land, and the farmers hold that herders let their livestock graze in their fields. While the pastoral community has access to a long stretch of the Wami and Mkata rivers, the contested wetland is the nearest flood plain. The banks of the rest of the Wami River bordering the Twatwatwa village land are overgrown with bush and therefore have much less dry season pastures. In addition, for the last few years, the Mkata River has run dry after the rainy season. Hence, the livestock of Twatwatwa that have not been brought out of the village area for greener pastures tend to congregate in Mawale in the dry season.

Most newspaper reports of the 2000 conflict generally favoured cultivators and portrayed livestock keepers as 'aggressive Maasai pastoralists' who were pitted against the normally peaceful village cultivators (see Maganga et al., 2007). This is not surprising, since it was livestock keepers who carried out the bloody act that caught the national attention. Newspapers also often echoed claims from farmers that the pastoralists were 'outsiders' rather than 'indigenous' to Morogoro Region. The idea that the Parakuyo Maasai do not belong in the Kilosa area also forms part of a local narrative. For instance, a District leader who farms in Mabwegere pastoral village without permission from the Maasai village leadership, stated: 'There are no Maasai with land here. The Maasai are not the indigenous people of this area' (Maganga et al., 2007: 211).

In recent years, debates about 'first-comers' and 'late-comers', 'indigenous' people and 'outsiders', 'natives' and 'strangers', or 'autochthones' and 'immigrants' have become increasingly important in Africanist scholarship (Chauveau, 2000; Geschiere, 2005; Geschiere and Gugler, 1998; Kuba and Lentz, 2006). Several factors may have precipitated this. First, pressure on land in parts of rural Africa is increasing, leading to a rising level of land tenure conflicts (Bassett, 1993, Peters, 2004). Second, global and national policy processes of land enclosures and formalization of land rights may trigger opportunistic behaviour among claimants (Benjaminsen et al., 2009). Third, a crisis in the idea of national citizenship in many parts of Africa may also explain this increased focus on who the 'indigenous' or 'autochthonous' people of an area are (Geschiere, 2005).

The struggle for control over land becomes a struggle between different narratives. In land disputes, people will tell the story of the land that they think will make an impact and support their case (Berry, 1997). The story told by farmers and their supporters — besides focusing on who came first — is also largely a story about how pastoralists generally overstock the land and cause environmental degradation. Brockington (2006) shows how such local stories about the supposed effects of pastoralism in the Rukwa Valley in western Tanzania echo national (and international)

environmental discourses. This is also the case in Kilosa. The pastoralists' story, on the other hand, is about lack of access to pastures, water and veterinary services.

Other wetlands are formally inaccessible because of conservation. The northern part of Mikumi National Park contains an attractive wetland area that still holds water towards the end of the dry season when all the surrounding areas are dry. In that season, there are hundreds of cattle in the Park, according to park staff. Pastoralists interviewed also confirm that they enter the Park at that time of year, risking a fine of 10,000 Tsh (US$ 10) per head of cattle. Often they avoid this payment by bribing Park staff or by supervising the cattle from a distance.

With the privatization of the NARCO State Ranch in 2005, access to water and pastures for the livestock keepers in Twatwatwa also became more difficult. A condition for being accepted as a lessee was to put up a fence around the block leased. This fencing obviously inhibits movements of livestock in general,[16] and more particularly access to the nearby Mkata River.

In Kilosa, local politicians and administrators are clearly on the farmers' side in ongoing farmer–herder conflicts. Furthermore, unlike parts of Arusha and Monduli Regions in northern Tanzania, pastoralists are in a minority in the District. It might be easier for pastoralists to influence policies in areas where they are in majority (Ndagala, 1990), but when they are in minority, they have traditionally bribed administrators in order to compensate for this lack of political influence. Since they own livestock, pastoralists have easier access to cash than farmers, and this can be used to bribe officials (see Brockington, 2006, for another example from Tanzania). This is illustrated in Table 1, which shows a sharp drop from the number of cases reported to the police, via cases forwarded to the Magistrate's Office and cases brought to the court, to the number of convictions. According to both farmers and herders interviewed, much of this is a result of the pastoralists being able to bribe the police and magistrates. The practices of paying officials to hand back confiscated livestock to herders, often without compensation to farmers, and of bribing the police or magistrates, have also led farmers to lose their trust in government officials.[17] This lack of trust was also referred to in the farmers' story above, and has paved the way for the *Sungusungu* to sanction crop damage in their own way, which in turn has resulted in retaliations from the *moran*, of which the Rudewa attack of 2000 is the most tragic example.

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16. Staff at Mikumi National Park interviewed also expressed concern that the fencing might cause problems for wildlife migrations as many wild animals tend to migrate along the Mkata River into Twatwatwa.
17. Fjeldstad (2001) has also shown that there is little trust in local government among people in Kilosa, which is demonstrated by their resistance to pay taxes.

CONCLUSIONS

In this case study, we have used a political ecology approach to explain one much discussed farmer–herder conflict in Tanzania. We argue that the violence that took place in this particular case in Kilosa cannot be explained solely by competition for scarce resources. This is more than just a resource conflict induced by a rising population. In fact, while the human population is increasing in Kilosa, livestock numbers are not.

Two key issues which could explain why the conflict escalated to violence, are not captured by the scarcity narrative. First, there is a long history in Tanzania of modernization policies marginalizing pastoralists. An anti-pastoral policy environment is gradually pushing pastoralists into a corner and making their access to pastures and water in the dry season increasingly difficult. Despite attempts to settle pastoralists in 'pastoral villages' and to make them adhere to calculated carrying capacities, Tanzanian pastoralists such as the Parakuyo Maasai continue to practise a mobile form of livestock keeping, in order to maintain their livelihoods. There is an inherent conflict between the flexible pastoralist model practised by most African pastoralists and 'the Botswana model' advocated by the authorities. This latter model has a long history in southern Africa, in particular, and is currently being used in the implementation of land reform in South Africa (see Benjaminsen et al., 2006, for a critique). In Tanzania, the government has sought to implement this model since the 1960s through the villagization programme and through the implementation of land tenure and agricultural policies. These policies favour agriculture at the expense of livestock keeping, and lead to the loss of key dry season grazing resources.

Second, the conflict is also about issues of governance and corruption. Pastoralists have a high capacity for bribing officials due to their wealth in livestock. This corruption leads to a loss of trust in authorities such as local government, the police or the judiciary, and in the willingness of these authorities to prevent conflicts in the future. The corruption and lack of trust in local government has resulted in actors trying to solve problems through violence.

This case study also suggests two fundamental political problems that raise questions about aspects of the 'good governance' formula favoured by development agencies. First of all, there is a general failure of political leadership both at the local and national level, as demonstrated by the use of divisive tactics to win local elections, and the national discourse that makes discrimination of pastoralists acceptable. Secondly, this study illustrates some of the weaknesses of decentralizing management to the local level. One way of reducing the level of conflict could be the establishment of an inter-village institution that would enable negotiation and arbitration between farmers and herders over the use of the flood plain. Although Village Councils are the primary institutions for resource management locally, there are precedents for managing trans-boundary resources such as forests and

wildlife. For example, the Forest Act allows for forests that are shared by several villages to be managed collectively, while the Wildlife Regulations enable villages to create Wildlife Management Areas, which operate beyond single village boundaries, based on wildlife movements and migrations. The same principles could be applied to the management of shared resources such as the disputed flood plain.

Finally, the conflict could be alleviated by making pastoral resources more productive through such measures as combating bush encroachment on pasture, controlling tse-tse and ticks, excavating dams for watering livestock, and reinstating cheap or free veterinary services. However, while such technical support to pastoralists is important,[18] it is also vital that the general pastoral policies in Tanzania should change.[19]

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18. NGOs have also played a part here. For example, Lutheran World Relief has provided support to the Twatwatwa community through the construction of two water ponds, tse-tse control and support to improved veterinary services. The PANTIL programme of the Sokoine University of Agriculture (of which this research was part) has also funded dams in two pastoral villages in Kilosa in order to help decrease the level of conflict between farmers and herders. Despite such support, however, one of these villages was again involved in clashes between farmers and herders in late October 2008, leaving several people dead.
19. The Tanzanian government may, for instance, take inspiration from francophone West Africa. In Mali, according to a national Pastoral Charter, pastoralists have the right to mobility. This right is valid not only on national territory, but also in neighbouring countries, according to a 2002 agreement under the auspices of UEMOA (*Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine*).

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