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THEME: Strengthening Research and Innovations for Climate Adaptation and Sustainable Development

Exploring Regional Differences in Climate Change Related Resource-Based Conflicts in Kenya

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Abstract

Climate change has attracted significant attention worldwide. IPCC projections suggest the Sub-Saharan Africa will suffer most from the consequences of extreme climate change events such as drought. Majority of the sectors for majority of the region are vulnerable to climate change, and this is set to worsen in the coming decades. Africa experiences more conflicts than any other paper of the world, and climate change is projected to worsen the region's conflict situation. In this paper, we examine, i) residents perceptions of the trends related to resource based conflicts during the last five years, ii) residents perception on the extent to which climate change is perceived to be contributing to the trends, and iii) residents perceptions on what the government is doing to invest in projects that are likely to mitigate resource based conflicts. Data were gather from purposive sampling using a structured questionnaire distributed to participants from Makueni, Machakos, and Kiambu counties. A sample of 40 males and 45 females completed the survey. Cross-tabulation was used to compare percent frequencies across the different counties on the different items. Finally, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) between-subjects design was used to investigate, i) whether the observed differences in participants' perceptions concerning trends of resource based conflicts differed statistically, ii) whether observed differences in participants' perceptions of climate change as a contributor to resource-based conflicts differed statistically, and, iii) whether participants' felt the government was sufficiently investing in projects to mitigate conflicts differed statistically across the three regions. Preliminary results reveal that residents' concerning trends in resource-based conflicts during the last five years vary across the three regions studied. In Machakos county, there are stronger perceptions that resource based conflicts have risen during the last five years (M = 3.92, SD = .66), followed by Makueni (M = 4.10, SD = .670). Kiambu residents do not consider resource based conflicts to have risen during the last five year, (M = 2.50, SD = 1.38). Differences in perceptions are statistically significant, $F_{2, 76} = 12.78$, $p < 0.01$. Also, climate change is strongly perceived to be a factor in the rise of resource based conflicts in Machakos County (M = 4.10, SD = .67). In Makueni county as well, climate change as a contributor to the perceived rise in resource based conflicts (M = 3.98, SD = 1.70). Surprisingly, Makueni residents show perceive the County government to be doing a lot more in terms of investing in projects with potential to mitigate conflicts than the other two counties. These findings have relevance on the adoption of climate adaptation frameworks for rural development by county governments.

Key words: Climate change, resource-based conflicts, vulnerability, livelihoods, adaptation projects, Kenya