

Involuntary Sedentarization and Resource Conflict in East African Rangelands

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Abstract

The rising incidence of resource conflicts in East African rangelands has become a serious challenge to development efforts in the region. Conventionally, many of these conflicts have been portrayed as the case of wealthy pastoralists letting their animals trample cropped fields or desperate farmers pushing into traditional grazing fields. However, this line of thinking is being challenged as more and more desperate pastoralists were forced to settle down in an environment set for mobile herding, and hence creating a potential for a different kind of conflict. Moreover, inability of the traditional institutions to cope up with the fast changing resource use pattern and provide effective regulatory role coupled with the abundance of modern weaponry have changed the nature of these conflicts. Hard empirical evidence is lacking, however, to ascertain whether there are important resource related conflicts as claimed in the literature, and if so, whether they occur the same way in all the communities and how effective and fair are the traditional conflict resolution mechanism. This paper attempts to answer these questions by using a household survey data collected in Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya.