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**CULTURAL BELIEFS AS A SOURCE OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS: A STUDY OF  
THE TURKANA AND POKOT PASTORALISTS OF KENYA**



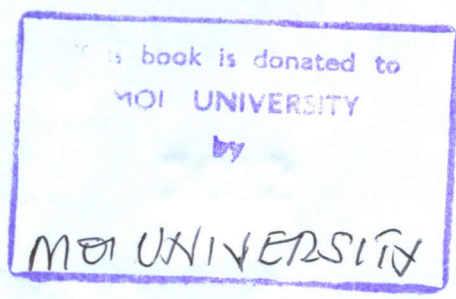
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## ABSTRACT

Kenya is currently facing an upsurge of ethnic conflicts involving pastoralists. These pastoralists communities are most vulnerable to violent conflict resulting in loss of life and property, ethnic polarization, economic instability, displacement and increased poverty levels. This study focused on ethnic conflicts between Turkana and Pokot pastoral communities of Turkana south and Pokot Central districts. The purpose of the study was to examine cultural beliefs as source of ethnic conflicts among the Turkana and Pokot Pastoralists of Kenya. Most significantly the study sought to examine the various cultural beliefs of the Turkana and Pokot pastoralists and how they bring about ethnic conflicts among the two communities, examine different forms of ethnic conflicts that occurs among the Turkana and Pokot pastoralists communities, establish the impact of ethnic conflicts on the social and economic development indicators of the pastoralists and suggest probable conflicts transformation mechanisms to enhance peaceful co-existence among the pastoralists communities. The study used the following instruments for collecting data: Questionnaires, interview schedule, Observation schedule and documentary data. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). In analyzing the data, the study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study was based on conflict transformation theory which is founded on the work of Galtung (1996). The theory states that Conflicts have both life-affirming and life-destroying aspects. They are formed from contradictions in the structure of society (cultural beliefs). They then become manifest in attitudes and behaviour. The incompatibility which arises between parties may be eliminated by transcending the contradiction, by compromise, by deepening or widening the conflict structure, and by associating or dissociating the actors. The changing dynamics of conflicts on the study area provided justification for a survey that will fill the gaps in the study of ethnic conflicts in Turkana South and Pokot Central districts. The findings of this study are expected to benefit the Turkana and Pokot pastoralists by helping in identify the root causes that have kept them in persisting conflicts and poverty. Further, the findings are also expected to be useful to the policy makers both at the national and district/county level. It is expected that medium term and long term policy measures identified herein will provide for effective conflict management and resolution, enhancement of peaceful culture and promotion of sustainable community governance. It is also expected to add knowledge to the discipline of conflicts resolution.