

# Socio-Cultural Dynamics Influencing Border Security Management along Kenya's Northern Border with Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to assess the implications of the border security management on Kenya's national security. The study assessed selected socio-cultural dynamics that influence the interactions of the border communities and their impact on border security management at the Moyale One Stop Boarder Post. The study was anchored on the realism and Regional Security Complex theories and adopted a descriptive research design. A total of 493 respondents were targeted by the study, out of which a sample of 220 was obtained using the Yamane Formula. The respondents were sampled, using purposive, stratified and simple random sampling methods. Primary data was collected using both questionnaires and Key Informant Interview (KII) guide. Collected quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables and figures while qualitative data was organized into themes for analysis and reported using narratives. The study established that despite the increased revenues and a reduction in insecurity incidents within the territory of Kenya as reported by 64% and 79% of the respondents respectively, incidents of insecurity continued to occur. This points to gaps in the enforcement process, attributable to the absence of a functioning border management committee. There is also lack of cooperation from the local community in providing information on illegal immigrants living among the community. This is mainly due to cross border family ties whose social capital superseded their nationality. The study recommends activation of the border security management committee with clear terms of reference and standard operating procedures to ensure that all border security agencies operate within a multi-agency framework. Further, the national and county governments should collaborate in implementing the African Union Border Programmes in order to incentivize the border community to own the border security management initiative

**Key Words:** Boarder Security Management, One Stop Border Post, Social Cultural Dynamics

## 1.1 background of the Study

The modern state exists in a socio-spatial international system that has transformed over time due to a range of factors such as the globalization phenomenon, a dynamic that increases the opportunity for breaches to national security (Milner, 1992). Of significant concern has been the deterritorialization debate which has brought to the focus the subject of international borders and their place in the management of security. Okumu (2016) and Rosenblum (2013) observe that many countries, especially in Africa face numerous challenges in managing their borders, hence raising the question of territorial integrity and sovereignty of the states. The most significant border challenges include the illegal entry and exit of people and goods. In an attempt to address this threat to their security, some countries have resorted to building walls to control entry and exit (Oommen, 1995 in Belleza, 2013). These include the Botswana-Zimbabwe wall, Algeria-Libya wall, Kenya-Somalia wall and the Morocco-Spain border wall, to mention but a few. The effect of such border management practices besides boosting security has been the physical separation of border communities most of which have lived side by side for years and crossed the international borders with minimal or no barriers at all.

Adepoju (2005) maintains that migration has been a way of life for centuries due to economic, political, demographic and related factors as migrants search for various aspects of human security. In contemporary times, intra and inter country movements remain a central feature in Africa. Amin (1974) in Adepoju (2005) observes that the onset of colonisation failed to take into account the local ethnic and social set ups and consequently split communities into adjacent countries. For example, along the borders between Ghana/Togo and Nigeria/Benin, frontier workers commute to and from either country to their places of employment. The onset of independence in these countries had little impact on the cross-border migration as the extensive borders could not be policed effectively and strong social

relations had been established across the borders. This paper argues that recognition of the interests of communities inhabiting the borderlands should be embedded into the mechanism of border security management with a view to incentivize them as partners in an effort to enhance national security.

## 1.2 Research Problem Characterization

The management of cross border movement of goods and persons who wish to legally enter or leave the territory of Kenya has been fraught with many challenges. These include the presence of illegal armed groups, the porous and un-demarcated nature of the borders, lack of adequate border posts, poorly equipped personnel, and marginalized communities in the borderlands. The challenges portend an existential threat to Kenya's national security as typified by the presence of a flourishing informal cross border trade which denies the exchequer the needed revenue for national development thereby impacting negatively on national security (Barka, 2012).

Makokha (2020) writing on Kenya's border security management observes that the Kenya Ethiopia border along which the Moyale OSBP is located experiences smuggling and human trafficking by criminal networks in addition to other illegal activities. IOM (2018) estimated that approximately 20,000 people and associated illegal merchandise were being smuggled through the area annually at an estimated cost of 40 Million USD which roughly translates to slightly over Ksh 4 Billion.

While in theory there is a border committee to coordinate border security actors, there is no evidence of coordinated border security management by the committee. The challenges highlighted herein elicit critical questions regarding the effectiveness of measures adopted by Kenya's border security management actors and the place of the government therein. Further, cognisant of the interests of communities inhabiting the borderlands, it is unclear whether the mechanism of border security management takes into account the social-cultural context of the inhabitants with a view to incentivize them as partners in border security in an effort to enhance national security.

## 1.3 Literature Review

Freedom of movement imbues in people the opportunity to travel within and without the territories of their habitual residence. This poses serious challenges for the security community charged with ensuring safety and security of the state. Altai Consulting (2021) observes that there are always socio-cultural factors at play in cross border security management. These include transnational conflict actors, common livelihoods and resilience patterns, different political and administrative structures, as well as weak and informal governance actors who lack the capacity to address cross border issues. In most cases, cross border activity has often been constrained by government laws, priorities and policies that give rise to frameworks and perceptions resulting in harmful high-level decisions and inadequate laws that are only biased to the security dimension of cross border management. Pavanello (2010) concurs with Altai Consulting (2021), arguing that pastoralist communities move across international borders and advises that governments especially in the Horn of Africa region should endeavor to cooperate to grant legal backing to informal cross border trade. This is vital and consistent with Karkare et al (2021) contention that informal cross border trade is in part motivated by concern for social capital and networks. Stringent state regulation of cross-border movement elicits negative perceptions by the border communities who deem such efforts as an affront to their social ties. This perception runs counter to state interests especially in respect of revenue collection, concern for health risks from traded goods, and physical security for overall economic development.

Transnational networks often result in activities such as sharing of grazing land and water, opportunistic use of natural resources through cross border mobility, trading of livestock and other commodities. Pavanello (2010) observes that there is little recognition by national decision makers on the important contribution of these cross-border dynamics and rather than them being strengthened and conditioned towards advancing national security, they are often outlawed and securitized, thus the states losing on their potential benefits while encouraging the illegalities since these communities must live within a system anchored on the principle of survival for the fittest. This study argues that the unexplored potential of cross border activities needs to be harnessed for the good of the local community and the respective countries. However, effective harnessing requires deeper understanding of the wide range of activities, vulnerabilities and risks that cross international borders within the socio-cultural context (Pavanello, 2010).

Meanwhile, Shikuku, Okoth and Kimokoti (2020) in their study on the nature of the cross-border conflicts along the Kenya-Ethiopia border aver that both sides of the border have a similar environment characterized by arid and semi-arid conditions with the same ethnic groups, culture and customs. Their study cites the ethnic groups in the area as comprising the Borana, Burji, Gabra and Garre. This study concurs with Mkutu's (2022) assertion that the approach to management of interethnic conflicts in northern Kenya is flawed more so because of the tendency by communities for cross border support, in solidarity with the spirit of kinship. The drivers of instability in

the area are scarce resources especially pasture and water which are critical for the pastoralist lifestyle of the communities. Consequently, a recourse to violence to gain access to the scarce resources is an option routinely adopted. Whenever the conflict is protracted, inter cultural clan dynamics come into play. Further, in neighboring Oromia region of Ethiopia, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), an armed group that has been declared illegal by Ethiopian authorities is resident and when it engages the Ethiopian security elements and are pursued, they cross the border to find refuge among their Borana cousins in Moyale on the Kenyan side. The assistance of OLF is sometimes enlisted by the Borana whenever they violently clash with other ethnic groups in the larger Moyale area (Shikuku, Okoth, Kimokoti, 2020). Based on this dynamic, it can thus be argued that the Kenya-Ethiopia border region is a microcosm of the larger Horn of Africa security complex where conflict inevitably becomes transnational due to social-cultural links. Often, the conflict among communities in the border areas is either a derivative of competition for scarce resources, political competition and incitement, or presence of militia groups such as the OLF and other community-based militia.

Shikuku, Okoth and Kimokoti (2020) maintain that the seasonal migration that was previously a coping mechanism for scarce resources has become a source of conflict among the border communities especially when those of one ethnic group venture into another ethnic group's perceived area of control. As argued by Hagmann, (2003), resource-based conflicts permeate '...both the direct resource users, including pastoralists, cultivators or developers and indirect users such as businessmen involved in livestock trade; sale of harvested fodder; harvesting and marketing of natural salt-licks; politicians, warlords, chiefs and other local administrators...' Consequently, the entire strata of society get involved in the conflict as each try to protect its interests. Eventually, cross border coordination becomes inevitable due to the unique border environment failure to which national security is negatively impacted.

From the political perspective, conflict emerges when administrative borders are imposed by the government without due consideration to local sensitivities such as communal land ownership and access to resources. When such land is alienated, songs inciting the local leaders and taunting of youth by women for the loss become drivers of conflict. In a highly patriarchal society such as the Moyale area, taunting by women is considered one of the worst insults to the menfolk who take up arms to protect their interests. Cilliers (2018) maintains that politics has been a driver of conflict as each ethnic group seeks to establish supremacy in the area. People seeking political leadership rally their communities against others which results in politics of exclusion. Consequently, those who feel aggrieved resort to use of arms to assert 'their rights or perceived entitlement', leading to conflict. The end result is violence, psychological and societal destruction. Events in the larger Marsabit county in the month of November 2021 in which communities were pitted against one another and lives lost followed by political leaders pointing fingers at each other, and widely captured in mainstream media is illustrative of the political dynamics prevailing in the border county. The latest was the incident of Moyale where the OLF assistance was sought by the Borana community in their feud against the Gabra (Walter & Komu, 2021).

Contributing to the debate on the security situation in northern Kenya, Little & Mahmoud, (2005) opines that the larger Moyale area of Kenya has experienced political violence and insecurity emanating from the insurgency in Ethiopia which often spills over to as the insurgent OLF group has ethnic affinity to the Borana of Kenya. It is observed that while the OLF does not directly base operations in Kenya, its supporters are able to reside in Kenya, fundraise and do business among the Borana community and elsewhere. According to Abdulrahman (2006), in an attempt to address the cross-border security challenge posed by the OLF along the Kenya Ethiopia border in the Moyale area, the Ethiopian security elements have at times crossed into Kenyan territory in pursuit of the OLF causing casualties to Kenyans. The Ethiopian security agents comprise local para militaries known as the Tabaka who are clan based and rivals to the OLF. The Tabakas target the OLF and their perceived sympathizers who normally comprise the Borana of Kenya. The targeting of the Borana serves a dual purpose of fulfilling the Ethiopian government's desire to neutralize the OLF while advancing the clan interests of the Oromo/Borana border communities. The targeting has at times taken the form of assassinations and abductions (Abdulrahman, 2006). This study argues that the spillover of Ethiopian security and insurgency violence into Kenya is dangerous and especially because of the use of ethnic paramilitaries as tools of attaining government security objectives. This is because as such involvement occurs, it inflames wider communal violence of the targeted communities who resort to illegal acquisition of arms to defend themselves. Moreover, such cross-border incursions have a direct bearing on cross border security management thereby impacting on national security. It can therefore be surmised that cross border conflict on the Kenya-Ethiopia border is community driven and ethnic in nature with resources, politics, and illegal arms being the main drivers among others. As a consequence, any cross-border security management has of necessity to take the social-cultural dimension into account.

While the focus of study is the Moyale region, a review of a similar border area has been done in respect of Namanga along the Kenya-Tanzania border. Ndunda (2013) maintains that international cross border management is increasingly becoming complex due to the many state agencies involved and observes that 25 % of border delays in Africa is due to infrastructure challenges while 75% is due to poor trade facilitation courtesy of administrative bureaucracy. These challenges result in reduced efficiency hence higher costs and loss of revenue. Kieck (2010) in Ndunda (2013) aver that many countries having realized this gap have embarked on the establishment of One-Stop-Border-Posts (OSBP) points as a mechanism to improve cross border movement of goods and persons. Odero (2020) concurs arguing that meaningful development and regional integration will only be possible if their border crossing points are modernized. This

is the only way to facilitate faster movement of goods and persons while ensuring the security of the countries concerned through control of negative effects of increased movements. Masinde (2015) also argues that in the case of Namanga OSBP maize is one of the major commodities that is moved across the border into Kenya but is often impeded by non-tariff barriers, lack of harmonized tariff charges, and complicated customs procedures which need simplification. However, the World Bank (2012) in Masinde (2015) observes that trade policy restrictions have often driven the maize traders from the formal to the informal channels thereby resulting in loss of revenue to the government while posing health hazards due to non-inspection. This is the context in which the Namanga OSBP was established to help manage the security lapses associated with the illegal movement of goods and people across the two countries.

From a regional perspective, Wafula (2012) states that the re-establishment of the EAC common market protocol to enable free movement of goods and persons gave impetus to the OSBP concept in the region. Namanga OSBP is a critical center on the Kenya – Tanzania Border which serves as a transit point for goods and people to and from Tanzania. This has been realized by harmonizing and simplifying border clearance procedures into an interface of one window. At the core of the OSBP of Namanga is the ability of the two countries' border authorities to carry out joint patrols for enforcement functions to curb smuggling and entry of illegal substances resulting in interception of illicit traders and smugglers. The joint patrol has resulted in increased legitimate trade translating to more revenue hence contributing to national security of the two countries.

Masinde (2015) avers that while the OSBP concept has taken root at Namanga, it has not been without challenges which can broadly be categorized into institutional and operational challenges. Institutionally, the organizational culture among the individual border agencies poses a challenge as some fear losing the authoritative control they exercise to a collective approach under the OSBP concept. Private sector actors had concerns about the security of their livelihoods under the OSBP concept. Border actors who benefited from smuggling and contraband see the OSBP concept as a threat to their livelihood. Further the bureaucratic systems that preceded the OSBP concept conferred a lot of clout to the civil servants which many feared would be watered down under the new concept hence some element of resistance came into play. Moreover, lack of a clear line of autonomy in decision making and conflict of mandate among the various agencies has seen some deviate from their functions leading to turf wars. This has negatively affected the optimum functioning of the OSBP. Further, some border agencies have been more concerned with the results of their individual organizations to the detriment of the overall functioning of the OSBP that requires a whole of systems approach to succeed.

Meanwhile, from an operational perspective, the main challenges include inadequate human and IT resources which impact on efficiency, use of manual records, low IT literacy levels and exclusion of some stakeholders especially the private sector (Masinde, 2015). It is surmised that while Namanga is geographically different from Moyale OSBP, the border dynamics are similar to the socio-cultural aspects of Moyale which has the dominant communities leading a pastoral lifestyle and normally move across international borders.

#### 1.4 Research Methodology

The research was conducted in the greater Northern area of Kenya, specifically in the Moyale OSBP-Marsabit County, which is located along the Kenya-Ethiopia border. This border post was selected because it is the only gazetted One Stop Border Post (OSBP) along the Kenya-Ethiopia border. Moreover, there is a common heritage between the Borana of Kenya and the Oromo of Ethiopia, who share various social characteristics such as language and family ties.

The target population in this study comprised the persons employed by the security and border agencies operating in Moyale namely the County administration, Kenya Defense Forces, the National Police Service, The National Intelligence Service, the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, customs, immigration and the local community. For the local community, the study specifically engaged the community opinion leaders comprising of the chairs of the councils of elders for the Borana and Gabbra ethnic groups, the elected political leaders and members of the business community. This was informed by the sparse population inhabiting the area. The summary of the target population is as presented in Table 1. below.

Table 1: Target Population

Population Category	Actual Population	Proportion/ Percentage
Kenya Defense Forces	145	29.4 %
National Police Service	266	54 %
National Intelligence Service	4	0.8%
Kenya Wildlife Service	10	2.0%

KEBS		2	0.4%
KEPHIS		4	0.8%
Kenya Forest Service		10	2.0%
Local	Elected Leaders	5	1.0%
Community	Elders	2	0.4%
	Business community Leaders	1	0.2%
Immigration Department		8	1.6%
Kenya Revenue Authority		36	7.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>493</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: KDF, NPS, IEBC, KRA, KWS, KEBS, KEPHIS, NIS, Immigration Department (2021).

This study used the Yamane (1967) formula to arrive at the sample size of 220 from the target population. This sample size was proportionately distributed across the strata comprising the sample as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample Size

Population Category	Population	Proportionate Percentage (%)	Sample size
Kenya Defense Forces	145	29.4 %	65
National Police Service	266	54 %	118
National Intelligence Service	4	0.8%	2
Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)	10	2.0%	4
KEBS	2	0.4%	1
KEPHIS	4	0.8%	2
Kenya Forest Service (KFS)	10	2.0%	4
Local	Elected	5	1.0%
Community	Leaders		
	Elders	2	0.4%
	Business community	1	0.2%
Immigration Department		8	1.6%
Kenya Revenue Authority		36	7.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>220</b>

This study used stratified sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling procedures to distribute the sample size. The sample size was broken down into the constituent groups, where each group was treated as a stratum according to task specialty such as immigration, wildlife, quality standards, customs, KDF, NPS among others. The purposive sampling procedure was used to sample the heads of the various state institutions participating in the study such as the KDF, NPS, NIS, Immigration, Customs, County administration, chairs of the council of elders, the chair of the business community and the elected leaders such as MPs and MCAs. Simple random sampling was used to obtain responses from the rest of the strata comprising the sample that included the NPS, the KDF, KWS, KFS, immigration, community leaders, MPs, MCAs, customs and county administration.

This study used two data collection instruments namely a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire comprised of open ended and closed ended questions. The closed questions intended to guide the respondent on the range of responses to choose from while the open questions provided the respondent an opportunity to express their views in respect of the questions posed to them. The study used a list of standardized questions to guide the interviews with the key informants who were purposively selected on account of the offices that they occupy. The qualitative data in this study was analyzed through content analysis and presented in the form of narratives and verbatim. On the other hand, quantitative data was fed into the SPSS program and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and means and presented using tables, graphs and charts.

### 1.5 Research Findings and Discussions

This study sought to establish the socio-cultural dynamics that influence the interaction of the border communities and how those dynamics impact on border security management within the OSBP framework. In terms of demographic composition of the population living in Marsabit County in which the Moyale OSBP is located, the study findings were as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: *Ethnic composition of Moyale*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Borana	102	55
Gabra	26	14
Rendille	41	22
Somali	17	8
Others (Turkana, Samburu, Ameru)	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>

Source (Field data, 2022)

A majority of the respondents, 55%, indicated the Borana as the most dominant ethnic group in the area. Instructively, the study established that indeed the Borana shared ancestral kinship ties with the Oromo of Ethiopia as highlighted by a key informant interviewee (KII):

The Moyale region and the larger Marsabit County by extension is occupied by the Borana who are the majority, compared to the Gabra and the Rendile. There are also Somalis and other communities such as the Turkana, Ameru and others who have largely come in for business. Being a border county, the Borana have their relatives called the Oromo living in Ethiopia with whom they share many cultural markers like language, cross border marriage among others. (KII B, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2022)

The study further established from the key informants that any interactions between the ethnic blocks including conflictual ones draws in the Ethiopian Oromo, some of whom could be members of the local militia group known as Tabakas or the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) insurgents hence impacting on Kenya's national security. This finding was found to be consistent with Herbert's (2020) assertion border communities though separated by international borders share various socio-cultural aspects that keeps the bond between them strong. Cross border movement therefore occurs irrespective of the level of enforcement of existing laws due to the cultural ties and social capital prevailing. This movement in the case of the study area includes the community militia and OLF insurgents in the case of the Oromo whose Kenyan Borana kin seek their support whenever they engage in violent conflict with other communities in the area as established by the study. This in itself undermines Kenya's national security and hence calls for creative solutions on the manner in which the security dimension can better be enhanced without undermining the strongly held social relations straddling the border. This study links ethnicity to border security management from the filial perspective: In cases where cross border communities are from the same ethnic background, the urge to shield one's kin from law enforcement is higher than would otherwise be if such relations did not exist. Consequently, cooperation of such communities with law enforcement actors is affected, thereby impacting national security. Thus, the Borana as the majority group with cross-border ties with the Oromo should be targeted when designing and executing any intervention measures which should include cross border liaison by the administration to minimize any negative effects arising.

In order to determine the social-cultural dynamics influencing border security management along the Kenya-Ethiopia border, a five-point Likert scale (SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; N-Neutral; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree) comprising of eight items against which a respondent was to choose one of the five options to indicate their strength of agreement or disagreement with a particular socio-cultural item as it relates to border security. The responses were as summarized and presented in Figure 1.

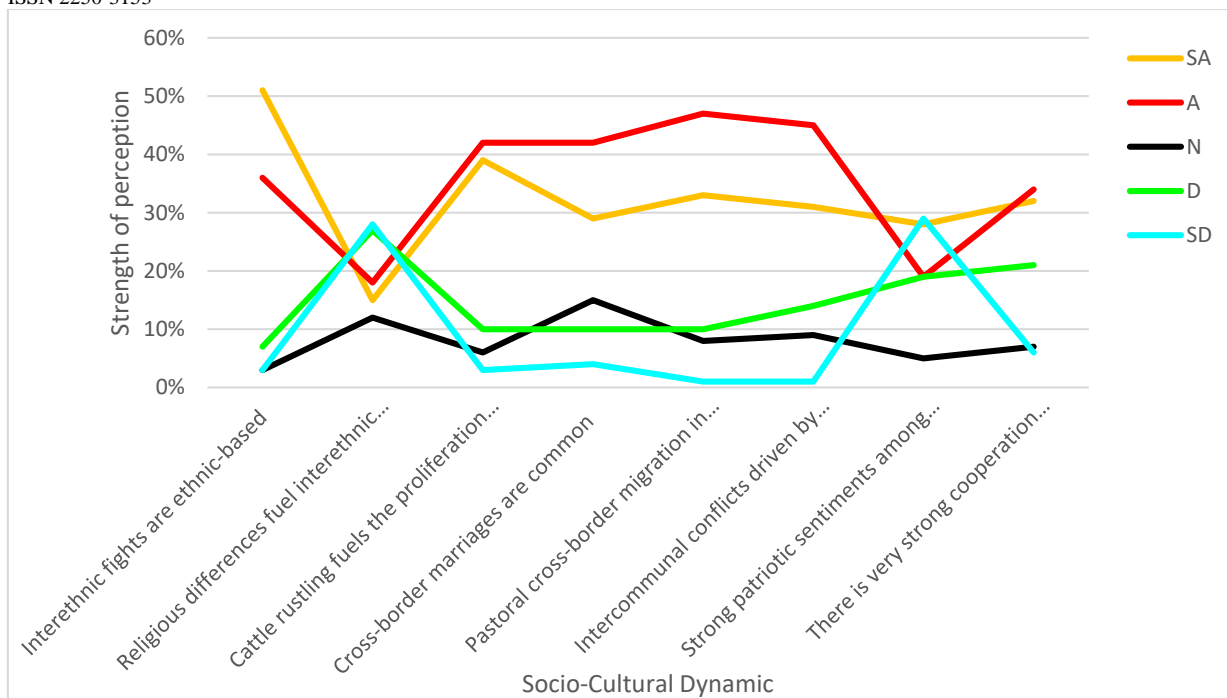


Figure 1: Social cultural dynamics influencing border security

Out of the eight socio-cultural dynamics presented to the respondents, six of them attracted strong majority responses of over 65% in favor of the assertion made by the statements, meaning that the six socio-cultural dynamics had a bearing on national security programming and thus any interventions had to be alive to them and the influence they had. The six statements were relating to inter-ethnic conflicts fought along ethnic lines, cattle rustling fueling proliferation of small arms and light weapons, cross-border marriages, role of elders in conflict management, cross-border pastoral migration in search of water and pasture during dry spells and cooperation between security agents and the local communities in driving the security agenda. In these six cases, the responses that indicated neutrality of opinion were not significant enough to the extent of tilting the majority finding were that to happen. On whether religious differences were fuelling violent clashes among the communities in Marsabit county leading to deaths and destruction of property, majority of the respondents at 55% disagreed. This implied that, religion was not a factor that could threaten national security in the study area. The statement on sense of patriotism and identification with the republic of Kenya among the communities living in Marsabit county attracted a split opinion as demonstrated by 47% of respondents concurring and 48% holding a contrary viewpoint. The neutral response was thus considered significant because it could tilt the split towards either side of the divide. The responses in the Likert scale were corroborated by KIIs during the interviews as illustrated by the excerpts hereunder:

Conflicts in this county have often been fought along ethnic lines, with the major antagonists being the Borana and the Gabra. The Gabra have always been on the receiving end because of the Borana numerical strength and the potential back-up they get from their Oromo cousins from Ethiopia. (KII F, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022)

Many Borana men have married Oromo women from Ethiopia and the vice versa is true. So, the cross-border marriages have strengthened the filial relations between the two communities. The fact that they share a language, despite the existence of dialects within it points to a possible common ancestry. (KII A, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022)

Whenever there are intercommunal disputes, and especially during the dry season when herders are on the move looking for pasture and water, we coordinate with our colleagues from the other community to try solving it amicably because nearly every homestead has a firearm. You can imagine how protracted a violent conflict can get under such circumstance. Security agents and the local administration are very helpful in coordinating the talks and acting as a buffer zone. (KII C, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022)

Relations among the border communities matter more than what the national government policies are since the government is far removed from the local communities and the challenges that confront them. Often, when there is a problem, it is the relations who come in to assist well before any government assistance comes and when it does, it is often too little too late. (KII N, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022)

The need to protect self against perceived adversaries, presence of clan militia, and the presence of OLF in Oromia region of Ethiopia has compelled the border communities to seek and own illegal firearms to protect themselves. This could be informed by the vast nature of the border stretch hence a challenge for security agencies to cover adequately. The deployment of more security personnel in addition to suitable equipment to cover the long distances could go a long way in handling the situation.

The occurrence of cross border marriages also presents a challenge as the communities have a long tradition of social capital that transcends national borders. It is this social capital that supersedes national security concerns whenever there are any illegal persons residing among the communities on either side and cannot be reported to the authorities. A KII suggested that the policy position in both Kenya and Ethiopia requires a person crossing the border to have official travel documents irrespective of how long they would be on the other side. The situation is compounded by the bureaucracy on acquisition of such documents by both countries as noted by a KII:

...the tight control on issuance of official travel documents such as passports by the Ethiopian authorities to minimize its citizens from travelling out of the country due to concern for the loss of manpower fuels illegal cross-border movements. (KII A, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022)

This study argues that this obtaining situation would require a policy change and use of a structured approach such as basic registration of those visiting either side of the border for short durations for filial reasons instead of demanding official travel documents. This would incentivize the local community to be first responders in the event of any security breach hence enhance national security.

The study concurs with Shikuku, Okoth and Kimokoti (2020) that cross border migration in search of pasture and water during dry spells is a coping mechanism for the communities' survival. This in itself is an important national security endeavor which requires a synergistic approach given the security complex that characterizes the study area. Often, when there is scarcity of pasture, the few available ones become contested, leading to conflict which in turn triggers the demand for illegal weapons, effectively undermining national security at the peripheral areas of the state. The elders among the border communities are held in high esteem and their word is taken seriously by all members regardless of their status in the public service. They are therefore key opinion shapers. The study contends that any intervention that requires community wide acceptance would demand that the elders be brought on board and be the conveyers of the border security management program to ensure a quick buy in. Initiative that could help turn around the negative aspects of the discussed dynamics would include scaling up education provision, stopping early marriages, ending cattle rustling, increasing security agents presence and the empowerment of elders and the local communities to enhance peace within and between communities. In essence, these proposals suggest a systems approach to interventions aimed at tapping into the social cultural dynamics in the study area aimed at enhancing national security.

The study findings are consistent with Pavanello (2010) and Altai Consulting (2021) who argue that mobile pastoralist systems move across international borders and advises that governments should endeavor to cooperate to grant legal backing to informal cross border trade. This is vital because as Karkare et al (2021) have argued, informal cross border trade is oftentimes motivated by concern for social capital and networks. The study notes that state regulation of such movement especially in cases where the border community have similar ethnicity breeds negativity towards government programs, and this has the effect of worsening rather than alleviating national security. The findings amplify this view point as they indicated the existence of strong cross border ties that hold sway over the border communities and supersede any government laws and regulations that manage cross border movement.

The study findings that regulation by the state is informed by the desire for revenue, concern for health risks from traded goods, and security for overall economic development are corroborated by Karkare et al (2021). The local concerns on the other hand are informed by the social capital and networks in existence. This is characteristic of all border areas and Moyale is no exception. A key intervention would require bilateral arrangements to ensure the cross-border movement of persons without breaching security since the movement will take place regardless of the laws in place.

Karkare et al's (2021) observation that a substantial part of intra African trade is small scale, informal, unrecorded and cross border in character holds true based on the study findings. The study argues that while capacity building and simplification of complex border procedures may alter the current dynamics of informal cross border trade to a certain extent, they are unlikely to substantially change the character of the trade due to deep rooted relational structures. Consequently, border specific approaches are recommended due to the unique dynamics of each border area or point.

The shared history and culture with frequent cross border interactions between communities inhabiting Moyale cannot be wished away. Practices such as cross border marriages are common among the communities living on either side of Kenya-Ethiopia border. Further, the communities were unwilling to report to the authorities on the presence of any persons illegally in the study area. The study further found that in environments where the cross-border community is of the same ethnicity heightens the depth of the social capital and



networks whose interaction may be in contravention of the rules and regulations of the countries affected. This therefore calls for policies and approaches on cross border management that are specific and sensitive to the local communities' socio-cultural dynamics. Adoption of the AUBP (2012) pillar three on community development would be a timely intervention in addition to ensuring that such movements are not hampered by adverse national policies.

## Conclusions

The study findings demonstrated the drivers of instability in the research area as competition for scarce resources especially pasture and water which are critical for the pastoral lifestyle of the inhabitants. Consequently, a recourse to violence to gain access to the scarce resources is an option routinely adopted which in turn triggers the demand for illegal weapons. Further, when the conflict breaks out, it is often along ethnic lines as reported by 87% of the respondents. Whenever the conflict is protracted, community dynamics come into play with the OLF from the neighboring Oromia region of Ethiopia, coming to the aid of their Borana cousins if they are affected. Their incursions impact on national security as casualties occur on the Kenyan side. Consequently, any conflict at the Kenya-Ethiopia border region inevitably becomes transnational due to social-cultural links thereby inflaming wider communal violence during which targeted communities resort to illegal acquisition of arms to defend themselves. This impacts national security. A key intervention measure would include cross border liaison and coordination by security agencies of both countries in addition to adequate manpower and equipment that is responsive to any security breaches arising.

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