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Historical Dynamics of Farmer-Pastoralist Land Conflicts in Morogoro Region, Tanzania: Territorial Claims, Commercialization, and Post-Liberalization Scarcity (1890s–2015)

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Abstract: *Land conflicts between farmers and pastoralists are a pervasive feature of rural Africa, often attributed to climate change and population growth. This article challenges such Malthusian narratives through a historical analysis of the Morogoro Region in Tanzania from the 1890s to 2015. Drawing on archival research, oral histories, and ethnographic data, we argue that these conflicts are not primarily driven by physical resource shortage but by a politically manufactured scarcity rooted in successive land governance regimes. In the pre-colonial era, flexible, territorial-based systems facilitated coexistence. Colonial land alienation for commercial estates forcibly compressed communities, sowing the seeds of competition. Post-colonial policies, from Ujamaa villagization to neoliberal privatization, further engineered economic scarcity through dispossession and elite capture, transforming land into a contested commodity. While these pressures have catalysed livelihood adaptations among Maasai pastoralists, they perpetuate cycles of violence that threaten regional security. The findings underscore the critical need for tenure reforms that integrate hybrid customary-formal systems and address the historical legacies of land alienation, offering crucial insights for policy amidst contemporary conflicts.*

Keywords: *Land Conflicts; Political Ecology; Maasai Pastoralism; Land Tenure Reform; Tanzania*

1. Background Information

Land conflicts between sedentary farmers and mobile pastoralists represent a critical and persistent challenge to rural security and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. Conventional narratives often frame these disputes as a direct consequence of environmental scarcity driven by climate change and population growth, or as primordial ethnic animosities (Homer-Dixon, 1999). However, a growing body of scholarship within political ecology refutes such Malthusian and essentialist explanations, demonstrating instead how conflicts are shaped by historical legacies of land alienation, power asymmetries, and institutional failures that (re)structure access to resources (Borras *et al.*, 2021; Hall *et al.*, 2022).

In Tanzania, the semi-arid Morogoro Region, encompassing the districts of Kilosa and Mvomero, epitomizes this complex dynamic. It is a zone where the agricultural expansion of Bantu farmers (e.g., Luguru, Kaguru) collides with the seasonal mobility of Maasai pastoralists, leading to cycles of violence that have escalated in recent decades (Mtenga, 2019). While climate variability and demographic pressure are often cited as triggers (Lengoasa, 2024), the historical roots of this competition remain inadequately explored. Existing historical analyses have effectively traced Tanzanian land conflicts to colonial enclosures and post-independence villagization (Iliffe, 2020 [1979]; Shivji, 2022 [1998]), and recent work has documented the role of neoliberal land grabbing (Mtenga, 2019). Yet, a critical gap persists: few studies provide a *longue durée* analysis that integrates the pre-colonial baseline to fully illuminate how successive political-economic regimes have systematically manufactured the very scarcity they purport to manage (Koponen, 1988; Lengoasa, 2024).

This article addresses this gap by examining the historical trajectory of farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Morogoro from the 1890s to 2015. We argue that these conflicts are not fundamentally driven by physical resource shortage but by a politically engineered economic scarcity, rooted in the transformation of land from a communal asset into a commodified source of capital accumulation. This process began with pre-colonial territorial affiliations, was violently accelerated by colonial commercialization through plantations and alienating policies, and was further exacerbated by post-colonial interventions, from *Ujamaa* socialism's displacements to neoliberal liberalization's speculative grabs.

Guided by a decolonial historiographic lens (Maldonado-Torres, 2021), this study poses three central questions: (i) How did pre-colonial social formations and territorial claims shape initial interactions and disputes? (ii) In what ways did colonial and post-colonial land governance policies intensify and re-scale these conflicts? (iii) What livelihood transformations have emerged among pastoralist communities as a response to these enduring tensions?

Henceforth, by synthesizing archival records, oral histories, and ethnographic data, this research reveals the continuities and discontinuities in how national and global forces, from structural adjustment programs to contemporary land investments, perpetuate conflict. The findings contribute to scholarly debates in political ecology and critical agrarian studies by historicizing the concept of scarcity. Furthermore, they provide urgent policy insights for designing equitable land tenure reforms (World Bank, 2023), emphasizing the need for hybrid customary-formal systems that can mitigate conflict and foster resilience in an era of global environmental change.

2. Literature Review

The scholarly discourse on farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Africa has undergone a significant paradigm shift, moving from simplistic scarcity and ethnicity models toward complex political ecology frameworks. Early Malthusian and environmental security theories framed these conflicts as an inevitable consequence of population pressure and resource depletion, often casting them as primordial ethnic antagonisms (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Kahl, 2006). This perspective, however, has been robustly challenged for its apolitical nature. The rise of political ecology has reframed the debate, emphasizing that conflict is not a natural outcome of scarcity but a product of socio-political processes that create and enforce scarcity for certain groups while privileging others (Koponen, 1988). Contemporary scholarship now focuses on the economic drivers of land alienation, including commercialization, elite capture, and the role of global capital in reshaping agrarian structures, which often marginalize pastoralist mobility and commons-based tenure systems (Scott, 1998).

In Tanzania, a substantial body of work has critically examined the role of the state in orchestrating land alienation from the colonial period to the present. Seminal historical analyses by Iliffe (1979) and Shivji (1998) meticulously documented how German and British colonial administrations used ordinances like the 1895 Land Ordinance to declare vast swathes of "unoccupied" land as crown property, facilitating the creation of sisal and cotton plantations that dispossessed local communities. This legal and territorial enclosure sowed the seeds of modern conflict by redefining land from a communal resource into a state-controlled commodity. The post-independence era, under Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa* socialism, continued this trajectory of state-led territorialization. While framed as a project of national development and collective living, the Villagization Act of 1975 and related policies functioned as a massive project of forced sedentarization that further disrupted pastoralist mobility and entrenched state control over land (Mwapachu, 2019; Scott, 1998). The neoliberal turn, catalyzed by the Land Acts of 1999 and subsequent Village Land Acts, privatized tenure and incentivized large-scale land acquisitions, leading to a new wave of dispossession by domestic elites and foreign investors (Locher, 2016).

Recent empirical studies in Morogoro have effectively documented the violent manifestations of these historical processes. Research highlights the role of "green grabbing", where land is alienated for conservation or climate mitigation projects, as a new frontier of conflict (Lengoasa, 2024). Reports from Kilosa District, for instance, detail how clashes have led to significant internal displacement, underscoring the human cost of these unresolved tensions (Mwamfupe, 2015). In response, a growing policy-oriented literature advocates for technical solutions, such as participatory land-use planning and the formalization of customary rights through Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy (CCROs), to bridge the gap between statutory and customary tenure systems (Kileo, 2024; Mwamfupe, 2015).

Despite these advances, critical historiographical and methodological gaps persist. First, there is a tendency to treat the pre-colonial period as a historical void or a static baseline, failing to adequately integrate its socio-territorial dynamics into the analysis of later conflicts (Hendrix, 2022). This omission risks naturalizing the politically manufactured scarcity that defines the contemporary period. Second, while quantitative models are valuable for identifying broad correlations, they often fail to capture the nuanced, lived experiences, historical memories, and local agency that are central to understanding conflict dynamics, aspects best revealed through oral histories and ethnographic methods (Shivji, 1998).

This article directly addresses these gaps. Therefore, by adopting a longue durée framework that spans from the pre-colonial era to 2015, this study moves beyond snapshot analyses to provide a deep historical contextualization of how economic scarcity was systematically produced. It periodizes conflict drivers to reveal the continuities and discontinuities in land governance. Furthermore, by methodologically blending archival evidence with rich oral testimonies, it captures both the structural forces and the lived realities of conflict, thereby offering a more comprehensive and robust explanation for the persistence and escalation of farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Morogoro.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative historical research design, rooted in the interpretive paradigm, to reconstruct the evolution of farmer-pastoralist land conflicts in Morogoro Region, Tanzania, from the 1890s to 2015. Drawing on the *longue durée* framework, the analysis emphasizes enduring structural shifts in land tenure and resource access, transcending ephemeral events to illuminate gradual transformations in socio-economic relations across pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods (Braudel, 1980; Howell & Prevenier, 2001). This perspective facilitates a nuanced periodization of conflict drivers, such as ecological pressures, colonial enclosures, and post-independence villagization policies, while highlighting persistent patterns like migratory pastoralism and agrarian expansion, alongside ruptures like the 1970s Ujamaa displacements (Iliffe, 1979; Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003). To ensure methodological rigor and interpretive depth, the design integrates archival analysis with ethnographic fieldwork, a hybrid approach that effectively bridges macro-historical forces with micro-level narratives of lived experience and collective memory (Stoler, 2009; Vansina, 1985). This triangulation mitigates biases inherent in singular sources, such as the Eurocentric lens of colonial records or the selective recall of oral histories, yielding a more robust reconstruction of conflict trajectories (Ntumva, 2023).

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection unfolded in two intensive phases from 2015 to 2018, targeting the high-conflict districts of Kilosa and Mvomero in Morogoro Region, where farmer-pastoralist disputes have intensified due to population growth, land privatization, and climate variability (Massoi, 2015; Mwakasangula & Shillingi, 2024). This phased strategy allowed for iterative refinement, with initial archival groundwork informing subsequent fieldwork and vice versa.

Fieldwork and Primary Oral Data: The ethnographic phase prioritized contemporary voices and historical recollections to capture the embodied dimensions of conflict. Key activities included:

i. 120 semi-structured interviews with diverse stakeholders: 40 community elders (20 farmers, 20 pastoralists), 20 traditional authorities (e.g., Mndewa chiefs among the Ndendeuli and Maasai Laigwanan), 30 local government officials, and 30 representatives from farmer cooperatives and pastoralist associations like the Parakuiyo Pastoralists Indigenous Community Development Organisation (PAICODEO). Conducted in Kiswahili and vernacular languages (e.g., Kichagga, Kikaguru) via certified interpreters, these interviews employed an open-ended guide probing conflict chronologies, land tenure perceptions, and adaptive livelihood strategies. Sessions averaged 60-90 minutes, yielding over 150 hours of audio-recorded narratives that revealed intergenerational patterns, such as the lingering impacts of 1950s Maasai evictions (Gulliver, 1971; Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003).

ii. 12 focus group discussions (FGDs), comprising 8-12 participants per group (six farmer-only, six pastoralist-only), hosted in neutral village settings across Kilosa and Mvomero. Facilitated using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques—like community timelines, seasonal calendars, and transect mapping—these sessions elicited shared histories and divergent viewpoints on resource hotspots, such as the Mkata Plains grazing corridors (Chambers, 1994; Kajembe *et al.*, 2003). PRA's visual and collective tools enhanced inclusivity, surfacing consensus on drivers like water scarcity while exposing tensions over crop damage by livestock.

iii. Participant observation over six months at flashpoints including weekly markets in Magole and Magindu, contested water points along the Great Ruaha River tributaries, and sites of recent skirmishes (e.g., 2015 grazing disputes in Gairo Ward). This immersion documented micro-dynamics, such as improvised negotiations at boreholes, contextualizing verbal accounts and revealing unspoken power asymmetries, like pastoralists' marginalization in formal dispute forums (Brehony *et al.*, 2003).

Archival and Historical Documentary Data: Complementing oral sources, archival work established a verifiable chronology, cross-checking narratives against contemporaneous records to counter memory distortions (Vansina, 1985).

i. **National Archives:** Extensive consultations at the Tanzania National Archives (TNA) in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma yielded over 200 files, including colonial district annual reports (e.g., TNA 61/10: Morogoro District Books, 1920-1945, detailing early land alienations), Land Commission proceedings (e.g., TNA 175/12: Native Land Tenure Inquiries, 1920s), and migration dossiers (e.g., TNA 13401: Maasai Reserves and Transhumance Policies, 1910-1930s). These illuminated structural antecedents, such as German-era enclosures that displaced agro-pastoralists and foreshadowed post-colonial clashes (Hodgson, 2001; Iliffe, 1979).

ii. **Missionary Records:** Unpublished diaries, correspondence, and quarterly bulletins from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Archive (1900-1950) and Moravian Mission holdings at Rungwe

and Herrnhut (1900-1940) offered eyewitness, albeit ethnocentric, vignettes of initial farmer-pastoralist encounters. For instance, CMS logs from Masasi and Morogoro missions (e.g., Rev. J. Chambers' 1920s reports) chronicled Maasai influxes and resultant frictions over mission-farmed lands, providing biased but invaluable granularity on cultural displacements (Galaty, 1993; Spear & Waller, 1993).

iii. **Secondary Historical Sources:** Seminal ethnographies and histories furnished contextual scaffolding, including P.H. Gulliver's *Neighbours and Networks* (1971) on Ndendeuli-Maasai interactions in southern Tanganyika, and John Iliffe's *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (1979) for broader colonial legacies like indirect rule's exacerbation of tenure insecurities (Gulliver, 1971; Iliffe, 1979).

3.3 Data Analysis

Transcripts from interviews and FGDs (totaling ~1,200 pages), alongside annotated archival excerpts and secondary texts, were digitized and uploaded into NVivo 12 for systematic thematic content analysis. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase protocol; familiarization, initial coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting; the process began with open coding aligned to core research questions, yielding an inductive-deductive codebook (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Foundational codes encompassed “resource scarcity narratives,” “colonial alienation mechanisms,” “*ujamaa* displacement effects,” “eviction resistance strategies,” and “livelihood diversification tactics,” refined iteratively through constant comparison to incorporate emergent sub-themes like “ethnic framing of conflicts” and “climate-induced mobility shifts” (Schneider, 2006; Yin, 2018).

Triangulation was operationalized throughout, juxtaposing oral testimonies against archival corroborants and secondary syntheses to bolster construct validity and mitigate source-specific distortions (Yin, 2018). Exemplars include validating elders' recollections of 1970s Ujamaa-era forced relocations (e.g., Operation Vijiji) via TNA files (e.g., Secretariat Files 1974-1976) and Iliffe's (1979) analysis of villagization's ecological fallout (Iliffe, 1979; Schneider, 2006). Query matrices and word clouds in NVivo quantified code co-occurrences, revealing relational patterns (e.g., scarcity themes peaking in post-1990s privatization narratives), while reflexive memos tracked researcher positionality to ensure interpretive transparency.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The protocol secured institutional review board approval from the University of Dodoma’s Ethics Committee (Ref: UDOM/IRB/2014/123, granted December 2014). Participants received verbal and written informed consent briefings in Kiswahili, delineating study aims, voluntary participation, withdrawal rights without repercussions, and data safeguards (Babbie, 2020). Given the volatility of land disputes; evidenced by 2012 Kilosa clashes displacing hundreds; vulnerability assessments informed tailored protections, including trauma-sensitive interviewing and immediate referral to local NGOs like PAICODEO for at-risk respondents (Massoi, 2015). Anonymity was rigorously upheld: pseudonyms replace identifiers, audio files are encrypted and access-restricted, and aggregated reporting precludes re-identification. Community feedback sessions in 2018 disseminated preliminary findings, fostering reciprocity and empowering participants as co-interpreters of their histories (Hajir *et al.*, 2022).

3.5 Limitations

While yielding profound contextual insights, the study's qualitative orientation precludes statistical generalizability, prioritizing transferability to analogous semi-arid agro-pastoral zones like Kiteto or Handeni Districts (Mwamfupe, 2015). Oral histories, indispensable for pre-archival eras, are susceptible to telescoping (compressing timelines) and presentist biases, where contemporary grievances (e.g., 2015 evictions) retroactively color recollections of 1930s migrations (Henige, 1982; Vansina, 1985); these were countered via multi-informant corroboration and archival anchoring. Colonial archives, conversely, embed imperial epistemologies; privileging administrative “common sense” over subaltern agency; necessitating decolonial critique to unpack silences on indigenous resistance (Stoler, 2009). Fieldwork's temporal bounds (2015-2018) omit post-2015 escalations, such as COVID-19's exacerbation of resource strains, warranting longitudinal extensions. Nonetheless, these constraints underscore the design's strength: a textured, emic-etic synthesis attuned to Morogoro's unique conflict ecology, with analytical leverage for broader African rangeland policy dialogues (Ntumva, 2023).

4. Pre-Colonial Foundations: Territorial Links and Complementary Economies (Pre-1890s)

Understanding the pre-colonial socio-ecological system is essential for deconstructing the manufactured scarcity imposed by later colonial interventions, which disrupted indigenous resource management and exacerbated tensions (Beidelman, 1967; Koponen, 1994). Prior to the 1890s, Morogoro region, encompassing diverse ecological zones from Uluguru Mountains to the Mkata Plains, was not a terra nullius or arena of perpetual strife, but a dynamically managed landscape where land tenure emphasized communal usufruct rights, anchored in kinship networks, oral genealogies, and mytho-historical territorial claims (Beidelman, 1967; Gonzales, 2004). This matrilineal system, prevalent among Bantu groups like the Luguru, Vidunda, and Kaguru, fostered largely complementary relations with incoming Nilotic pastoralists, notably the Maasai, who migrated southward into the region during the 17th and 18th

centuries seeking viable grazing lands amid ecological pressures and population dynamics (Spear & Waller, 1993; Waller, 1985). Archaeological and linguistic evidence underscores this integration, revealing early Bantu agricultural expansions along riverine corridors like the Wami, which intersected with pastoral routes, enabling symbiotic adaptations rather than outright displacement (Gonzales, 2004; Ehret, 1998).

The social organization of farming communities was profoundly territorial and matrilineal, with clans tracing origins to mythic ancestors (*koma*) and asserting claims through rituals at earth shrines (*mitambiro*), which functioned as spiritual, political, and ecological anchors (Beidelman, 1967; Brain, 1980). Access to land was governed by clan heads (*Mndewa*), who allocated usufruct rights based on household needs, soil fertility, and kinship ties, ensuring equitable distribution in a landscape of shifting cultivation and fallowing (Mbonile, 2005; Babere & Mbeya, 2022). A reciprocal tribute system (*ngoto*), involving produce shares from users to allocators, reinforced social cohesion and hierarchies without alienating land as private property, aligning with broader Bantu principles of stewardship over ownership (Beidelman, 1967; Kessy, 2011). Among the *Luguru* in the Uluguru Mountains, for instance, these mechanisms sustained intensive banana and millet cultivation on terraced slopes, while *Vidunda* and *Kaguru* groups in the lowlands managed floodplain gardens, adapting to seasonal floods and droughts through communal labor exchanges (Gonzales, 2004; Beidelman, 1967). This framework promoted resilience, with oral traditions recounting how shrine-based rituals invoked ancestral protection for harvests, embedding land use in cosmological reciprocity (Brain, 1980).

The Maasai, arriving via southward migrations along the Rift Valley fringes around the 18th century, were assimilated into this framework rather than imposing a rival system (Waller, 1985; Spear & Waller, 1993). Their transhumant mobility, cyclical movements between wet-season highlands and dry-season riverine pastures, represented a rational ecological strategy in semi-arid zones, complementing sedentary farming by utilizing marginal or post-harvest lands (Hodgson, 2001; Homewood & Rodgers, 1991). Interactions manifested as strategic symbiosis: pastoralists traded milk, meat, hides, and blood-based broths for Bantu grains (sorghum, millet) and legumes, forging inter-ethnic markets at seasonal gatherings (Gulliver, 1971; Spear & Waller, 1993). Moreover, Maasai herds grazing on fallow fields deposited manure, enhancing soil nutrients in a proto-agro-pastoral cycle that boosted yields for subsequent plantings—an organic integration lauded in ethnographic accounts as mutually beneficial (Homewood & Rodgers, 1991; Galaty, 1993). Linguistic borrowings, such as Maa terms for Bantu crops, further attest to this fusion, with Maasai age-sets (e.g., *Ilmurran* warriors) occasionally providing protection against raids from distant groups like the Hehe, in exchange for access rights (Spear & Waller, 1993; Waller, 1985).

Conflicts in this era, as gleaned from oral histories, early ethnographies, and archaeological proxies like fortified hill settlements, were sporadic, localized, and non-existential, often termed "*migogoro midogo*" (small misunderstandings) over finite resources such as a contested spring or incidental crop trampling by stray cattle (Hodgson, 2001; Beidelman, 1967). Unlike later ideologically charged clashes, these disputes lacked structural scarcity, arising instead from proximity in shared corridors like the Mkata Plains (Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003; Koponen, 1994). Resolution drew on embedded institutions: clan elders (*Mndewa*) and Maasai *Laigwanan* (spiritual-political leaders) mediated through oaths at neutral shrines, compensation via grain-livestock swaps, or temporary relocation, leveraging the region's expanse, evidenced in *Kaguru* oral lore of "vast skies" permitting fluid adjustments without violence (Beidelman, 1967; Gonzales, 2004). A 2017 FGD elder in Mlali village echoed this: "*The land was vast like the sky; if we had a problem with our neighbors, we would just move a little further. There was no need for bloodshed*," aligning with historical patterns where consensus preserved alliances over enmity (Waller, 1985).

Thus, the pre-colonial era forged a resilient mosaic of flexible, kin-based tenure and economic complementarity, where Bantu farmers and Maasai pastoralists co-evolved adaptive strategies amid ecological variability (Galaty, 2013; Homewood & Rodgers, 1991). Subsequent colonial enclosures, rom German crown lands to British reserves, did not inject conflict into a pristine harmony but ossified these fluid systems, supplanting affiliation with exclusivity and commodifying land, thereby seeding the protracted farmer-pastoralist antagonisms of the modern era (Iliffe, 1979; Hodgson, 2001).

Table 1. Characteristics of Pre-Colonial Socio-Economic Systems in Morogoro Region (Pre-1890s)

Feature	Farming Communities (e.g., Luguru, Vidunda, Kaguru)	Pastoralist Communities (Maasai)	Nature of Interaction
Land Tenure Principle	Communal usufruct, matrilineal clan territories anchored in ancestral shrines (*mitambiro*) and oral genealogies (Beidelman, 1967; Brain, 1980).	Communal access via seasonal transhumance and customary grazing corridors, guided by *Laigwanan* oversight (Waller, 1985; Spear & Waller, 1993).	Non-exclusive use-rights prioritized reciprocity over ownership, enabling shared access in riverine and fallow zones (Mbonile, 2005; Homewood & Rodgers, 1991).
Primary Livelihood	Sedentary agriculture: intercropping sorghum, millet, legumes, and bananas on terraced or floodplain plots (Gonzales, 2004; Kessy, 2011).	Mobile pastoralism: herding cattle, goats, sheep across savannah gradients for milk, blood, and traction (Galaty, 1993; Hodgson, 2001).	Economically complementary; pastoral manure enriched fields, while crop residues supplemented dry-season fodder (Gulliver, 1971; Homewood & Rodgers, 1991).
Basis of Social Organization	Matrilineal patriclans with *Mndewa* allocators; rituals reinforced territorial bonds (Beidelman, 1967; Babere & Mbeya, 2022).	Patrilineal age-sets (*Ilmurran* warriors, *Ilpayiani* elders) and sectional territories (Spear & Waller, 1993).	Cross-group negotiation via elders and *Laigwanan*, with occasional alliances against external raiders (e.g., Hehe) (Waller, 1985; Koponen, 1994).
Conflict Drivers	Incidental livestock incursions on ripening crops; competition for riparian water in dry seasons (Hodgson, 2001; Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003).	Denial of passage through farmlands; overgrazing on post-harvest stubble amid droughts (Galaty, 2013).	Localized and resource-specific, not ethnic or ideological; mitigated by ecological abundance (Koponen, 2023).
Conflict Resolution	Elder-mediated pacts at shrines; compensation in produce or ritual fines (Brain, 1980; Beidelman, 1967).	*Laigwanan* arbitration with relocation options; blood oaths for truce (Waller, 1985).	Consensus-driven, emphasizing relocation and exchange to restore harmony (Gonzales, 2004; Spear & Waller, 1993).
Economic Exchange	Supplied grains, legumes, and temporary garden plots for herders (Gulliver, 1971).	Provided milk, meat, hides, and protective labor (Hodgson, 2001).	Symbiotic barter at seasonal nodes, fostering interdependence and cultural diffusion (e.g., crop terms in Maa) (Spear & Waller, 1993; Homewood & Rodgers, 1991).

5. Colonial Commercialization: Alienation and Intensified Tensions (1890s–1961)

The colonial period constituted a profound rupture in Morogoro's socio-ecological fabric, systematically reconfiguring land from a communal asset interwoven with kinship and reciprocity into a state-monopolized commodity primed for export-oriented capitalist extraction (Shivji, 1998; Iliffe, 1979). This transformation, driven by imperial imperatives for raw materials and labor, entailed state-orchestrated land alienation, the juridical entrenchment of ethnic-spatial segregation, and the escalation of farmer-pastoralist frictions, from episodic, negotiable skirmishes to entrenched rivalries over a deliberately constricted resource commons (Sunseri, 2002; Maddox, 2006). In Morogoro, spanning the fertile Mkata floodplains and Uluguru foothills, these policies not only dispossessed local Vidunda, Luguru, and Kaguru cultivators but also curtailed Maasai transhumance routes, compressing diverse livelihoods into overlapping, overburdened territories and fostering zero-sum antagonisms (Hodgson, 2001; Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003).

German colonial governance (1890s–1916) spearheaded this dispossession via the 1895 Land Ordinance, which unilaterally proclaimed all "unoccupied" or "waste" lands, encompassing seasonal pastures and fallows integral to indigenous rotations, as crown property (Kronland), a doctrinal sleight-of-hand that effaced indigenous usufruct regimes (Iliffe, 1979; Pesek, 2015). This enabled the wholesale concessioning of prime estates to European syndicates, precipitating the proliferation of sisal monocultures across Kilosa and Mvomero districts, sprawling plantations that engulfed over 50,000 hectares by 1914, ousting *Vidunda* floodplain farmers and *Luguru* highland tillers from alluvial soils and relegating them to eroded slopes or indentured tenancy (Sunseri, 2002; Glassman, 1995). The ripple effects were seismic: agrarian displacements funneled cultivators into erstwhile pastoral corridors, while Maasai lost vital dry-season grazings to barbed-wire enclosures, engendering inadvertent herd incursions and retaliatory crop trashing (Hodgson, 2001; Waller, 1985). Compounding this, the 1890s rinderpest epizootic, unleashed via colonial cattle imports, annihilated up to 90% of East African bovines, decimating Maasai herds and triggering famine that halved their regional population,

rendering survivors more vulnerable to labor coercion and further territorial incursions (Sunseri, 2015; Gilfoyle, 2006).

British suzerainty, inaugurated post-World War I, perpetuated and polished this extractive edifice rather than dismantling it. The 1923 Land Ordinance entrenched "public land" trusteeship under the Crown, ostensibly safeguarding "native" holdings but pragmatically corralling populations into ethnically delineated reserves to facilitate settler agribusiness and administrative containment (Maddox, 2006; Kaniki, 1980). Pastoralists bore the brunt: Maasai mobility, hitherto an ecological bulwark against overstocking, was recast as vagrancy and penalized through stock taxes, dipping mandates, and quarantine cordons, exacerbated by recurrent rinderpest flares that colonial veterinary interventions often amplified via erratic culls (Hodgson, 2001; Waller, 1985). Archival ledgers, including the Morogoro District Annual Reports (TNA 61/10, 1920–1945), chronicle a surge in Maasai reprisal raids on *Vidunda* maize fields during the 1930s Dust Bowl droughts, attributing 47 documented incidents to pasture scarcities and epidemic aftershocks that slashed herd viability by 60% (Iliffe, 1979; Sunseri, 2015). These enclosures not only homogenized rangelands into static "tribal" silos but also eroded cross-ethnic mediation forums, supplanting them with district commissioners' fiat (Maddox, 2006).

Post-1945, amid decolonization's twilight, these fissures widened under demographic swells, fueled by repatriated migrants and pronatalist policies, and Malthusian alarmism that pathologized pastoralism as an engine of "overgrazing" and desiccation (Neumann, 1998; 2002). Colonial agronomists, invoking pseudo-scientific tropes of African environmental profligacy, rationalized escalated evictions and anti-erosion edicts that funneled Maasai into "scheduled areas" ill-suited for wet-season calving, while farmers grappled with compacted holdings amid sisal's labor drain (Neumann, 2002; Anderson, 2002). Ethnographic vignettes from this study illuminate the psychosocial schism: vigilante farmer posses supplanted ancestral elder councils, arming rudimentary spears against "stray" herds in a bid for self-vigilance (Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003). A Maasai Laigwanan from Mvomero, in a 2016 interview, evoked this rupture: "*The Europeans drew lines on a map that we could not see, and suddenly our cattle were criminals. The farmers saw us not as neighbors with straying animals, but as invaders*," a sentiment echoed in TNA Secretariat Files (S. 148/12, 1940s) decrying "*tribal encroachments*" (Hodgson, 2001; Kaniki, 1980).

By independence in 1961, colonialism had artfully contrived a land penury that was neither natural nor inevitable, but deliberately engineered through seven decades of legislative dispossession, ecological re-engineering, and administrative fiat (Shivji, 1998; Aminzade, 2013). It had eviscerated the pre-colonial fluidity of tenure, where land was a relational good governed by overlapping usufruct, seasonal reciprocity, and negotiable boundaries, and replaced it with a rigid, bifurcated, and exclusionary paradigm that arrayed agrarian sedentism against pastoral nomadism in perpetual, zero-sum contestation (Iliffe, 1979; Hodgson, 2001; Maddox, 2006).

The colonial state bequeathed to the new nation a landscape carved into three irreconcilable categories: (a) freehold and leasehold estates (mostly alienated to settlers and corporations), (b) overcrowded and ecologically marginal "native reserves" for farmers, and (c) even more constricted "tribal grazing areas" or "scheduled zones" for pastoralists that ignored the ecological necessity of wet- and dry-season dispersal (Coulson, 1982; Shivji, 1998). Mobility, once the cornerstone of pastoral resilience, had been criminalized as trespass; fallowing, once the heartbeat of shifting cultivation, was branded as "wasteful" and taxed or alienated; and the interstitial zones where farmers and herders had historically co-existed and exchanged were now policed as boundaries rather than corridors (Neumann, 1998; Sunseri, 2002).

This engineered scarcity carried a powerful ideological payload: colonial discourse had recast pastoralists as ecological villains and existential threats to the nation's agricultural future, while portraying sedentary farmers as the authentic custodians of progress (Hodgson, 2011; Walsh, 2012). Ethnic stereotypes hardened into administrative truth, and the colonial archive, district books, tour reports, and veterinary files, came to read like a protracted indictment of pastoral "overstocking" and "vagrancy," thereby naturalizing the very conflicts that colonial policy had manufactured (Anderson, 2002; Maddox, 2006).

Far from resolving these contradictions, the postcolonial state under Nyerere's Ujamaa ideology inherited and dramatically amplified them. The 1967 Arusha Declaration and subsequent villagization campaigns (1970–1976) treated the colonial reserves as mere staging posts for a more radical reordering: millions of rural dwellers—including both farmers and pastoralists—were forcibly relocated into planned nucleated villages, and vast tracts of rangeland were converted into state farms, parastatal ranches (e.g., the National Agricultural and Food Corporation's wheat and dairy schemes in Mvomero and Kilosa), and new settlement blocks (Nyerere, 1968; Coulson, 1982; Schneider, 2014). In Morogoro Region alone, Operation Morogoro and Operation Rufiji displaced tens of thousands, often bulldozing Maasai bomas and burning temporary shelters to enforce compliance (Jennings, 2008; Askew *et al.*, 2013). The 1975 Villages and Ujamaa Villages Act effectively extinguished residual customary rights outside registered villages, completing the commodification begun under colonialism and transforming the last remnants of flexible tenure into de jure state land (Shivji, 1998; Pedersen, 2016).

Thus, the toxic inheritance was not merely a shortage of land, but a deeply sedimented structural antagonism: a legal-institutional framework, a cartographic imagination, and a developmental ideology that framed pastoral mobility and extensive land use as inimical to modernity. This pernicious legacy would ensure that post-independence conflicts in Morogoro were not simply continuations of colonial-era grievances, but their radical intensification under the banner of socialist transformation (Boone, 2014; Greco, 2016).

relations into a landscape of enforced sedentarization and speculative enclosure, where Maasai transhumance clashed with *Vidunda* and *Kaguru* agrarian expansion, precipitating recurrent violence over shrinking water points and grazing corridors (Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009; Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003). Archival records and oral testimonies from this study reveal how Ujamaa-era displacements (1970s) funneled pastoralists into ecologically inviable villages, while 1990s privatizations invited "green grabs" by

Table 2: Mechanisms and Impacts of Colonial Land Alienation in Morogoro (1890s–1961)

Colonial Mechanism	Period	Key Policy/Instrument	Direct Impact on Land Access	Consequence for Farmer-Pastoralist Relations
Initial Alienation & Plantation Economy	German Rule (1890s–1916)	1895 Land Ordinance; Sisal Concessions (e.g., Kilosa estates) (Iliffe, 1979; Sunseri, 2002)	Seizure of 50,000+ ha fertile plains; displacement of *Vidunda/Luguru* farmers and Maasai dry-season grazings (Glassman, 1995; Pesek, 2015).	Involuntary cohabitation; farmers encroaching on pastoral routes, sparking inadvertent crop damage and retaliatory raids (Hodgson, 2001; Waller, 1985).
Spatial Segregation & Confinement	British Rule (1920s–1940s)	1923 Land Ordinance; Native Reserves; Tribal Grazing Areas (Maddox, 2006; Kaniki, 1980)	Criminalization of Maasai transhumance; confinement to ecologically mismatched "silos" shrinking access by 40% (Hodgson, 2001; Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003).	Diminished evasion options; intensified rivalry in bottleneck zones like Mkata corridors, eroding negotiation pacts (Neumann, 1998; Iliffe, 1979).
Economic Extraction & Biopolitical Control	Interwar & Post-WWII (1920s–1950s)	Hut/Poll Taxes; Livestock Levies; Rinderpest Quarantines/Culls (Sunseri, 2015; Gilfoyle, 2006)	Herd decimation (90% losses); labor outflows compressing reserve holdings and undermining pastoral capital (Waller, 1985; Sunseri, 2002).	Breakdown of reciprocity; rise of famine-driven raids (47 incidents, 1930s) and farmer vigilantism amid eroded elder authority (TNA 61/10; Maddox, 2006).
Administrative Narratives & Legitimation	Entire Colonial Period	"Overstocking"/Degradation Discourses; Anti-Erosion Campaigns (Neumann, 2002; Anderson, 2002)	Justification for evictions (e.g., 1940s Maasai relocations); vilification of pastoral "vagrancy" to sanction further enclosures (Hodgson, 2001).	Ethnicization of disputes as "tribal clashes"; obfuscation of policy origins, entrenching mutual suspicion over shared scarcities (Shivji, 1998; Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003).

6. Post-Colonial Trajectories: From Ujamaa Displacement to Neoliberal Grabbing (1961–2015)

The post-colonial era in Tanzania did not dismantle the colonial scaffold of land alienation but repurposed it through successive state-led paradigms; socialist collectivization and neoliberal marketization; that, despite their ideological polarity, perpetuated centralized authority over resources, eroded customary tenure, and amplified ecological and social scarcities for smallholder farmers and pastoralists (Shivji, 1998; Coulson, 2013). In Morogoro Region, these shifts transformed fluid pre-colonial and early independence land

biofuel syndicates, fragmenting communal rangelands and entrenching a cycle of dispossession that by 2015 had claimed hundreds of lives in Kilosa and Mvomero districts alone (Massoi, 2015; Mwamfupe, 2015).

6.1 The Ujamaa Era: Forced Sedentarization and State Control (1961–mid-1980s)

Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa* ("familyhood") ethos, enshrined in the 1967 Arusha Declaration, envisioned rural modernization via cooperative villages to foster self-reliance and dismantle colonial inequities (Nyerere, 1968; Coulson, 2013). Yet, the 1975 Villages and *Ujamaa* Villages Act operationalized this

as coercive villagization, Operation *Vijiji* (1974–1976), relocating over 11 million Tanzanians, including 500,000 pastoralists nationwide, into 8,000 nucleated settlements that disregarded ecological gradients and seasonal mobilities (Jennings, 2008; Schneider, 2006). In Morogoro, Maasai from the Mkata Plains were herded into sites like Magole and Gairo, where year-round confinement, termed "Operation *Imparnati*" for permanent settlements, overstocked pastures, accelerated soil degradation, and triggered fodder shortages, compressing herds into farmer enclaves and igniting crop raids (Hodgson, 2001; Homewood & Rodgers, 1991). Ethnographic data from this study corroborates archival evidence: a 2017 FGD in Kilosa evoked the era's trauma, with an elder lamenting, "*They put us in one place and told us to be modern. But our cattle were penned like prisoners, and the land around the village turned to dust*," mirroring patterns of 40–60% livestock die-offs from overgrazing and failed communal plots (Schneider, 2006; Iliffe, 1979).

Concurrently, parastatals like the National Agricultural and Food Corporation (NAFCO, est. 1964) and National Ranching Company (NARCO, est. 1975) expropriated 1.5 million hectares of rangelands for mechanized wheat, dairy, and sisal schemes, often on former Maasai corridors, with efficiency rates below 20% due to mismanagement and arid mismatches (Hirji, 2019; Maguire, 1998). In Mvomero, NAFCO's Rufiji Basin expansions bulldozed bomas and stock routes, displacing 10,000 agro-pastoralists and sparking the 1975 clashes, where Sukuma migrants and Vidunda farmers clashed over flooded paddies, resulting in ~200 deaths, arson on 50 homesteads, and 5,000 livestock losses (Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009; Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003). These "tragic testaments" (Hirji, 2019) exposed Ujamaa's irony: while ostensibly egalitarian, it amplified colonial sedentarization biases, vilifying pastoral "vagrancy" as anti-modern and eroding *Laigwanan* mediation for district fiat, yielding a 30% drop in regional milk yields by 1980 (Schneider, 2006; Coulson, 2013).

6.2 The Neoliberal Turn: Privatization and Land Grabbing (post-1991)

The 1980s debt crisis, exacerbated by *Ujamaa's* fiscal strains, pivoted Tanzania toward structural adjustment, birthing the 1991 Shivji Commission, whose report championed customary rights and anti-alienation safeguards but was diluted in the 1995 National Land Policy and 1999 Land Acts (Shivji, 1998; Locher & Sulle, 2014). The Village Land Act (No. 5) ostensibly devolved 70% of territory to 12,000 villages via Certificates of Village Land (CVLs), while the Land Act (No. 4) enabled Granted Rights of Occupancy (GROs) for investors, yet procedural hurdles, like mandatory surveys costing TSh 10–20 million per village, and elite capture rendered formalization elusive, leaving 80% of pastoral holdings unregistered and vulnerable (Pedersen, 2016; Sundet, 2000). In Morogoro, only 15% of Kilosa villages secured CVLs by 2010, exposing gaps exploited by the 2002 Leadership Code suspension, which greenlit politically wired grabs (Sundet, 2021; Askew et al., 2013).

This regime unleashed "*accumulation by dispossession*," blending domestic tycoons, Gulf emirs, and EU firms in opaque pacts that bypassed Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), often via coerced village council votes (Pedersen & Benjaminsen, 2021; Noe & Kangalawe, 2021). Morogoro epitomized this: the 2010 Sun Biofuels scandal saw a UK firm lease 8,211 hectares in Kisarawe for jatropha biofuels, displacing 11 villages' miombo woodlands and grazing commons, promising 2,000 jobs and infrastructure but delivering <10% fulfillment before collapsing in 2011, leaving fallow fields, unpaid compensations (TSh 4–13 million/ha shortfalls), and 670 ha of "*family land*" annexed without recourse (Bergius, 2012; Sulle & Nelson, 2009). Analogous "*green grabs*" proliferated: Swedish biofuel ventures in Kilombero Valley engulfed 40,000 ha by 2015, while conservation enclosures like Selous Game Reserve extensions evicted 5,000 pastoralists, funneling them into Kilosa's flashpoints (Noe & Kangalawe, 2021; Locher & Sulle, 2014). By 2015, these pressures, compounded by 3% annual population growth and 20% rangeland loss, drove Kilosa conflicts to ~50 fatalities yearly, per Tanzania Police Force tallies, with water wars at Mkata boreholes claiming 20 lives in 2014 alone (Mwakasangula & Shillingi, 2024; Tanzania Police Force, 2016).

Amid marginalization, Maasai agency shone through livelihood pivots: by 2015, 40% in Mvomero adopted agro-pastoralism, intercropping maize with acacia for fodder, while 25% ventured into beekeeping (yielding TSh 500,000/hive annually) and eco-tourism via PAICODEO cooperatives, reclaiming partial agency via CCRO pursuits (Goldman & Riosmena, 2013; Homewood *et al.*, 2009). Yet, these "*coping cascades*" (Mwamfupe, 2015) masked coercion: diversification often stemmed from herd losses (50% post-*Ujamaa*), not choice, blurring ethnic lines but intensifying intra-village tenure contests in a commodified common (Hodgson, 2011). Thus, by 2015, Morogoro's conflicts, once migratory frictions, had ossified into chronic insurgencies, a distilled legacy of post-colonial "*scarcity engineering*" that privileged accumulation over equity (Shivji, 1998; Boone, 2014).

Table 3: Post-Colonial Land Governance and its Impacts in Morogoro (1961–2015)

Period / Policy Paradigm	Key Policies & Instruments	Primary Mechanism of Land Alienation	Impact on Farmer-Pastoralist Relations
Ujamaa & State Socialism (1961–mid-1980s)	Arusha Declaration (1967); Villages & *Ujamaa* Villages Act (1975); NAFCO/NARCO schemes (Nyerere, 1968; Jennings, 2008).	Forced sedentarization & state expropriation: Operation *Vijiji* relocated 11M people, converting 1.5M ha rangelands to parastatal farms (Schneider, 2006; Maguire, 1998).	Overstocking in unsuitable villages (40–60% herd losses); eroded mobilities sparked clashes (e.g., 1975 Mvomero: 200 deaths, 5K livestock lost) (Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009; Hirji, 2019).
Neoliberal Liberalization (post-1991)	Shivji Commission Report (1991); Land Acts (1999); Leadership Code suspension; SAPs (Shivji, 1998; Sundet, 2021).	Privatization & market-based grabs: GROs enabled 100K+ ha leases; elite/foreign pacts bypassed FPIC (Pedersen & Benjaminsen, 2021; Locher & Sulle, 2014).	Fragmented commons (20% rangeland loss); evictions fueled chronic violence (~50 deaths/year in Kilosa by 2015) over water/crops (Mwakasangula & Shillingi, 2024; Tanzania Police Force, 2016).
Livelihood Response & Adaptation	-	Diversification & hybrid tenure: Agro-pastoralism (40% adoption); beekeeping/tourism via CCROs (Goldman & Riosmena, 2013; Homewood *et al.*, 2009).	Blurred livelihoods intensified intra-group contests; resilience masked coercion, sustaining competition amid tenure voids (Mwamfupe, 2015; Hodgson, 2011).

7. Discussion: The Political Economy of Manufactured Scarcity and Its Repercussions

This longue durée analysis decisively demonstrates that the protracted farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Morogoro Region are not primarily driven by demographic pressures or climatic variability, commonplace explanations in policy circles, but are instead the product of a historically constructed political economy of scarcity (Benjaminsen & Ba, 2019). Across pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras, successive land governance regimes have systematically dismantled flexible, reciprocal resource systems and replaced them with rigid, exclusionary, and commodified tenure arrangements that force communities into zero-sum competition over a deliberately constricted commons (Shivji, 1998; Boone, 2014). The core finding of this study is that scarcity in Morogoro has been persistently manufactured through policy-induced alienation, enclosure, and marketization, transforming land from a relational good into a scarce economic asset and converting manageable frictions into entrenched, often lethal, antagonisms (Greco, 2016; Benjaminsen & Baumann, 2021).

7.1 Synthesizing the Historical Trajectory

The research reveals a clear trajectory of escalating conflict intensity and changing modalities, rooted in evolving mechanisms of dispossession. Pre-colonial Morogoro sustained a resilient socio-ecological equilibrium through overlapping usufruct rights, seasonal mobility, and economic complementarity between Bantu cultivators and Nilotic pastoralists, with disputes resolved via elder-led negotiation and relocation within an abundant landscape (Beidelman, 1967; Waller, 1985; Spear & Waller, 1993). Colonialism ruptured this equilibrium by imposing a dualistic, racially inflected tenure system, crown lands, native reserves, and tribal grazing areas, that physically compressed communities, criminalized pastoral mobility, and subordinated land to export-capitalist extraction, thereby producing the first systemic scarcity (Iliffe, 1979; Sunseri, 2002; Hodgson, 2001).

Post-independence regimes did not reverse but reconfigured this architecture. Ujamaa-era villagization (1973–1976) and parastatal ranching schemes intensified state-orchestrated enclosure, forcibly sedentarizing pastoralists in ecologically unsuitable nuclei and converting 1.5 million hectares of rangeland into inefficient state farms (Jennings, 2008; Schneider, 2014). Neoliberal reforms from the 1990s onward replaced direct state expropriation with market-mediated alienation, enabling elite capture and foreign "green grabs" that fragmented remaining commons and deepened precarity (Locher & Sulle, 2014; Pedersen & Benjaminsen, 2021). This historical continuum accounts for both continuities (persistent land alienation as the root driver) and discontinuities (from colonial plantations → socialist state farms → biofuel estates), confirming that conflict escalation tracks the deepening commodification of land rather than population or rainfall trends alone (Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009; Mwamfupe, 2015).

7.2 Agency, Adaptation, and the Transformation of Pastoralism

Despite structural violence, Maasai and *Parakuiyo* pastoralists have exhibited remarkable adaptive agency. By 2015, 35–45% of pastoral households in Kilosa and Mvomero had diversified into agro-pastoralism, beekeeping,

charcoal production, and community-based tourism, reflecting a global pattern of "*pastoralists-plus*" or pluri-active livelihoods designed to mitigate risk in shrinking rangelands (Homewood *et al.*, 2009; McCabe *et al.*, 2010; Goldman & Riosmena, 2013). Yet this adaptation is profoundly double-edged. While it enhances short-term resilience, it also accelerates the erosion of pastoral identity and the internalization of sedentarist, individualizing logics that colonial and post-colonial states have long promoted (Hodgson, 2011; Gardner, 2016). The adoption of cultivation by formerly pure pastoralists blurs erstwhile ethnic-livelihood boundaries, generating new intra-community stratification (wealthier herders monopolizing CCROs) and complicating land-use planning, as former grazing corridors are converted to maize fields (Askew *et al.*, 2013; Bluwstein, 2017). Diversification, therefore, is less a triumphant story of agency than a coerced transformation within a closing frontier (Mwamfupe, 2015).

Table 4: The Evolution of Scarcity and Conflict in Morogoro Region: A Synthesis

Era	Primary Scarcity Driver	Nature of Conflict	Livelihood Response	Institutional Failure
Pre-Colonial	Proximity amid abundance	Localized, negotiable "*migogoro midogo*" (Beidelman, 1967; Waller, 1985)	Economic complementarity (manure, milk-grain exchange) (Homewood & Rodgers, 1991)	None; robust customary institutions (elder councils, Laigwanan)
Colonial (1890s–1961)	Spatial compression & legal alienation (plantations, reserves)	Systemic raids, criminalized mobility (Sunseri, 2002; Hodgson, 2001)	Resistance; reliance on diminished commons	Imposition of rigid, racially stratified tenure (1923/1926 Ordinances)
Post-Colonial Ujamaa (1961–1985)	State expropriation & forced sedentarization (villagization, NAFCO/NARCO)	Large-scale violent clashes (e.g., 1975 Mvomero) (Benjaminsen *et al.*, 2009)	Initial shock; coerced communal farming	Suppression of customary systems for top-down socialist planning (Schneider, 2014)
Post-Colonial Neoliberal (1991–2015)	Market alienation & elite capture (Land Acts 1999, green grabs)	Chronic, lethal competition; evictions (Pedersen & Benjaminsen, 2021)	Diversification into agro-pastoralism, beekeeping, tourism (Goldman & Riosmena, 2013)	State facilitation of private accumulation that bypasses community rights (Locher & Sulle, 2014)

7.3 From Local Grievance to National Security Risk

The cumulative failure to redress these historically rooted grievances has elevated farmer-pastoralist clashes from localized disputes to a chronic human-security and governance crisis. Between 2000 and 2023, Morogoro Region recorded over 500 conflict-related deaths and the displacement of more than 50,000 people, with economic losses estimated at TSh 120 billion annually from destroyed crops, livestock theft, and foregone trade (Walwa, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2023; World Bank, 2023). These conflicts now constitute Tanzania's most persistent internal security challenge after electoral violence (Must, 2023). Climate change operates as a threat multiplier, prolonging dry seasons and intensifying water competition, but only within a policy-constructed context of weakened customary institutions and absent cross-community governance (IPCC, 2022; Benjaminsen & Baumann, 2021). Absent structural tenure reform, climate-adaptation projects risk becoming new vectors of exclusion, as seen when drought-resilient boreholes are captured by village elites or privatized (Kiswaga & Mshale, 2023).

7.4 Policy Implications and Future Research

The evidence decisively refutes technocratic or ethnicized framings of the conflict. Effective intervention must target the political economy of land governance:

i. Legally entrench hybrid tenure regimes that recognize collective customary rights within statutory law, including communal CCROs for rangelands and enforceable grazing corridors (Alden Wily, 2018; Lengoasa & Nkonya, 2024).
ii. Mandate participatory, multi-stakeholder land-use planning at district and ward levels, with binding agreements on seasonal access routes and shared water infrastructure.
iii. Embed conflict sensitivity and historical redress into climate-adaptation programming, ensuring that

resilience projects do not replicate patterns of exclusion.

Future scholarship should employ high-resolution GIS and remote-sensing analysis to map the precise spatial footprint of historical alienations (colonial estates, NAFCO farms, biofuel concessions) against contemporary conflict hotspots, while longitudinal cohort studies are needed to assess whether pastoralist diversification strengthens or erodes social cohesion over generations (Bluwstein *et al.*, 2018; Homewood *et al.*, 2021).

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This article has traced the historical dynamics of farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Tanzania's Morogoro Region over a century-long span, from the 1890s to 2015. Moving beyond Malthusian and ethnic narratives, the analysis has demonstrated that these persistent conflicts are not an inevitable outcome of climate change or population pressure, but rather the direct result of a *politically manufactured scarcity*. This scarcity has been systematically engineered through successive land governance regimes that have transformed land from a flexible, communal resource into an exclusive, state-controlled, and marketized commodity.

The *longue durée* perspective reveals a critical continuity: the relentless alienation of land from local communities. The pre-colonial era of territorial affiliation and economic complementarity was dismantled by colonial commercialization and spatial segregation. This foundational dispossession was not reversed after independence but was reconfigured through the state-led displacements of Ujamaa villagization and, later, the market-driven enclosures of neoliberal liberalization. Each era intensified competition by further constricting the resource base accessible to both farmers and pastoralists, while simultaneously eroding the customary institutions capable of managing that competition.

A key finding of this research is the agency and adaptation of pastoralist communities in the face of these structural pressures. The diversification of Maasai livelihoods into agro-pastoralism, beekeeping, and tourism is a testament to their resilience. However, this adaptation also signals a profound transformation of pastoralist identity and a pragmatic, if reluctant, engagement with a system that privileges sedentary and privatized land use. This shift underscores that the conflict is not a static "clash of cultures" but a dynamic struggle over resources within an increasingly constrained and inequitable political economy.

The implications are grave and extend beyond local grievances. These historically rooted land conflicts now represent a significant threat to human security, social stability, and sustainable development in Tanzania and the wider region. They highlight the failure of land governance systems that prioritize state control and commercial interests over the rights and livelihoods of rural communities.

Therefore, meaningful resolution cannot be found in short-term mediation or technical fixes alone. It requires a fundamental rethinking of land tenure based on historical justice. Policy interventions must champion *inclusive, hybrid tenure reforms* that legally empower customary systems, protect communal land rights, and facilitate participatory land-use planning. Henceforth, by historicizing scarcity, this article ultimately advocates for a decolonial approach to land governance, one that severs the persistent legacies of alienation and creates a foundation for genuine coexistence, economic resilience, and lasting peace in Morogoro and beyond.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

I hereby declare that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the research and findings presented in this paper.

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