

Pastoralists and Governance: Parliamentary Groups and Other Strategies for Pastoralist Representation

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Pastoralist Development: a turn towards policy

- Pastoralism, with its mobility and collective resource management, is now recognised as a rational and sustainable livelihood strategy in Africa's drylands
- The problems pastoralists face are predominantly external
- With a partial exception for animal health, there are few "technical fixes"
- So debate has turned towards policy

Policy Issues in Pastoral Development

- Land tenure and collective resource management
- Livestock marketing
- Inadequate services and infrastructure
- Growing vulnerability to drought and dependence on food aid
- Conflict and insecurity

From Policy to Governance

- The process of policy-making needs to involve the people affected by policies
- Policies need to be *implemented*, equitably and efficiently, and minimising unforeseen negative impacts
- There is ample evidence that neither of these is happening in the pastoral areas of Africa
 - ⇒ Need to understand and improve *governance*

Governance: a definition

- The process whereby elements in society wield power and authority, and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life, and economic and social development
- A broader notion than government, involving interaction between the formal institutions of government and civil society
- To be assessed by criteria including the degree of legitimacy, representativeness, popular accountability and efficiency with which public affairs are conducted

Adapted from International Institute of Administrative Sciences 1996

Including Pastoralists in Governance

- There are multiple strategies depending on diverse political and social contexts – and no magic bullets
- Pastoralists have multiple political identities: pastoral, livestock-keeping, regional, ethnic, religious, “indigenous”
- There is a legacy of poor policy and poor governance towards pastoralism that needs to be put right – but ultimately pastoralists must choose which identities they wish to stress.

Some Strategies for Pastoral Representation

- NGOs and CBOs
- Producer associations
- “Traditional” authorities
- Decentralised local government
- Parliament

NGOs and CBOs

- Supporting civil society and the self-organization of pastoralists is vital
- But civil society on its own cannot contribute to good governance
- NGOs must link to formal government, and act above the community level
- Umbrella organisations of “pastoral NGOs” can be effective
- NGOs, national and international, must look to their own legitimacy and accountability

Producer and Trader Organisations

- The francophone Sahel has a strong tradition of organising livestock-keepers at local and national level, as part of a broader *mouvement associatif*
- Potential risks for equity, but potential benefits in effectiveness, particularly on marketing
- A parallel East African initiative is the Kenyan Livestock Marketing Council: a stakeholder association with economic and social objectives – which stress the pastoral context of livestock trade

“Traditional Authorities”

- Colonial and post-colonial governments have long sought to harness “traditional rule” and in so doing have always changed it
- The search for traditional authority untainted by government is an illusionary one
- Current experiences include government-appointed chiefs in Kenya, the Council of Amakari in Somali Region Ethiopia, and perhaps new experiences in Sudan
- Does “traditional rule” have something to teach us about the governance of mobile peoples?
- The question must be: “is it legitimate and effective?”, not “is it truly traditional?”

Decentralised Local Government

- Decentralised local government is a powerful trend in Africa, that can circumvent the winner-takes-all politics of the capital city
- Equipping pastoralists to participate is vital
- But does decentralisation on a spatial basis work against the participation of mobile people?

Pastoralists in Parliament

- Groups representing or claiming to represent pastoralists have been formed in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia
- NRI and PENHA researched these groups during 2003-2004, funded by DFID Livestock Production Programme and CAPE project within AU-IBAR
- Objective: “to assess the circumstances in which pastoralist parliamentary groupings can be an effective lobby for pro-poor, pro-pastoralist policy change, and what external assistance they require in this role”
- Three three-week case studies: semi-structured interviews with MPs and other stakeholders, questionnaire survey (in Ethiopia), document review

Democratisation in Africa

- A democratic wave 1989, although Northeast Africa showed different and complex trajectories
- Growth in power of parliaments including committee systems
- Parallel developments in civil society, media and donor assistance
- "Parliament matters"
- But the role of MPs has not been taken seriously by researchers – they seem not to count as "policy-makers"

Issues for analysis

- Uncertainties in data, competing narratives
- Need to see MPs as representatives, as policy-makers and as involved in implementation
- Uneven dissemination of new pastoral development paradigms and their policy implications: localised policy and technical debates
- Need to examine the formal and informal workings of parliament
- Need to understand decentralisation and MPs' relation to local government
- Need to understand “deep contexts” of history, ethnicity, and real and perceived national security

Evolution of the PPGs

- Evolution since 1996, with linkages between the PPGs and with NGOs and donor-funded projects
- Kenyan PPG formally established 1998, relaunched 2003
- Ugandan PPG formally established 1999, dormant from 2001, revived 2003
- Ethiopian PASC established 2003

Status and Membership - Kenya

- Historical context: dominance of KANU (former ruling party) in pastoral areas but few benefits to pastoralists
- 1998 group subject to harrassment by Moi government
- An informal group without constitution, open to MPs concerned with pastoral development – in practice limited to MPs from traditional pastoral constituencies.
- c.30 active members, out of 39 such constituencies: continued predominance of KANU MPs

Status and Membership - Uganda

- Context of two different and marginalised pastoral groups, despite both being government supporters
- Formal, but voluntary group with 7 stated goals: constitution drawn up in 1999
- Membership was “open to all MPs who feel their constituencies have pastoralist related issues that the group should address”
- Intention to involve MPs from majority agricultural constituencies with pastoral minorities, and constituencies subject to raiding by pastoralist neighbours

Status and Membership – Uganda

(2)

- 112 MPs attended inaugural meeting but active membership 1999-2001 was smaller and limited to pastoral constituencies and agropastoral Teso
- Current group includes MPs from majority agro-pastoral and agricultural constituencies: active membership unclear

Status and Membership - Ethiopia

- Context of strong divide between highlanders and pastoralists, ethnic federalism, and strong EPRDF dominance
- Not a voluntary association of MPs but a Standing Committee of Parliament, established by Proclamation with legislative and oversight activities
- 8 pastoral and 5 non-pastoral members chosen by Parliament

Achievements

- Achievements to date modest, and not always easy to distinguish from activities of individual MPs and extra-parliamentary groups
- Important oversight activities in Ethiopia
- Campaigning activity in Uganda
- Influencing education policy in Kenya
- Contribution to awareness-creation alongside NGOs/CSOs
- Moderating effects on conflict
- Contribution to policy development modest – NGOs/CSOs led in the big debates

Determinants of effectiveness (1)

- Specific national political circumstances and hidden agendas, e.g.:
 - Suspicion of Somalis from Shifita War in Kenya
 - Desire of Karimoja MPs to benefit from Bahima contacts with Museveni, and of Bahima MPs to associate with a larger group
- MPs' capacity, and knowledge of parliamentary procedures
- Ability to use synergies between MPs of different backgrounds

Determinants of effectiveness (2)

- Influence of individuals: as brokers between parties, between politics and NGOs, between politics and academia
- But reliance on individuals makes PPGs fragile
- Continuity and institutional memory: linkages to NGOs and civil society can help
- Information: a universal constraint but manifested differently: e.g. Karimoja MPs are more aware than Bahima MPs
- Basic capacity, e.g. transport

Challenges for the Groups (1)

- Influencing the big debates
- Mastering parliamentary procedures
- Maintaining continuity across elections: groups must explore more formal links with NGOs, former members
- Accessing appropriate information: information needs vary, may include “technical” and “socio-economic” research, but also conditions in MPs’ own constituencies

Challenges for the Groups (2)

- Mobilising own/parliamentary resources to maintain donor confidence
- Overcoming local and ethnic particularism
- Utilising synergies between members: regions, generations, backgrounds: “mentoring”

Lessons for Donors and NGOs

(1)

- The PPGs are worth supporting, but they can only ever be one strategy for better governance
- Pastoralists need to be empowered through civil society, communications, the media and decentralised local government
- Understand these groups in the real-world political context: history, ethnicity, real and perceived national security needs, party politics

Lessons for Donors and NGOs

(2)

- Be pragmatic: representation is a process, not a state
- Include MPs as “policy-makers”, but recognise they are more – they oversee implementation
- Understand what MPs actually do: formal and informal parliamentary processes
- Understand the relations between MPs and local governments
- Work with individuals, especially those who can act as bridges: between parties, with NGOs and academia

Lessons for Donors and NGOs

(3)

- Address “hard” capacity needs, especially transport
- Address differing information and training needs.
- Build appropriate institutional arrangements and alliances for information, for continuity and for concerted lobbying: with NGOs/CSOs, with researchers, with former MPs
- Work regionally: view crossing frontiers as positive

*“The wind is now blowing towards the
pastoralists, but it has not yet rained”*

Thank you

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www.nri.org

www.penhanetwork.org

<http://www.nri.org/projects/pastoralism/parliamentary.htm>