

Conflict Management Mechanisms in Local Authorities in Muranga Town Council Kenya between 2007 till 2013

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Abstract: Conflicts in local authorities and county governments were a frequent feature in Kenya before and after devolution. The conflict in Kandara Town Council was similar to many other conflicts in Nairobi county, Kisumu County, Nakuru County and other Counties. The purpose of the study was to identify the strategies of conflict management in local authorities in Kenya, using the case of Kandara Town Council, Murang'a County. Kandara Town Council was characterized by conflicts over a long period. These involved personality, economic, political, scarce resource distribution, power and identity. The study attempted to determine the strategies and methods that had been used in conflict management and to identify the challenges that faced the stakeholders in conflict resolution, identified possible solutions to those challenges. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: To identify nature and extent of conflicts in Kandara Town Council: To establish the effects of the conflicts in Kandara Town Council: To assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms that were available for conflict resolution in Kandara Town Council: Explore other mechanisms for resolving conflicts in Kandara Town Council. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods to conduct the research. The target population was 120 people drawn from the staff and management of Kandara town in Muranga County. A sample of 60 respondents was selected from the population using purposive and random sampling methods. Data was collected using both secondary and primary methods. Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data while target interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Data was collected and analyzed by use of descriptive statistics to determine the factors that influenced conflict management in local authorities in Kandara town council. Data was analyzed and presented in the form of frequencies tables, pie-charts, graphs and tables. The research was conducted between October and December 2013. The findings from this study could be used to resolve conflicts in other cities and municipal council authorities in Kenya. Data was analysed using SPSS tool for quantitative data while qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. Data was presented using reports, diagrams, graphs and charts. The study scope covered the period between 2007 and 2013.

Background to the study

Before 2013 when devolution was introduced in Kenya Local Authority used to be the closest administrative system to the public in any country. It was a crucial institution for the delivery of services to the local communities and for nurturing democratic practices around the world. However, Local Governments in many developing countries tended to be ill-equipped and financially not capable of performing all functions and responsibilities that were assigned to them (UNDP, 2008). Local government authority could have been defined as that part of the government of a country that operated on local level and functioned through representative organ known as council, established by law to exercise specific powers within well defined area of jurisdiction (Warioba, 1999). Local Government could have been a system of government where the state allowed establishment of local units of government with powers and authority that made local decisions on matters that affected local community and mobilized local resources for implementation of decisions made (Omamo, 2008). In his research, Wanjohi (2003) considered local government as institution whose operations addressed needs and aspirations of citizenry and extended administrative and political control to community. On the other hand, Local government referred to specific institutions or entities created by national constitutions or central government or state legislation or executive order to deliver a range of specified services to relatively small geographically delineated area (Barasa, 2009)

Internationally, local authorities managed affairs of local communities. Legislation in different countries gave local authorities different powers. They had varied functions transferred to lower units of local government. Local governments were called upon to deliver social services which were seen as vehicles for meaningful social and political participation. In most countries, local authorities had undergone evolution. For instance, in Britain, there had been changes since the Industrial Revolution where significant changes occurred in response to the ills of Industrial Revolution (Jackson, 2008). Since the second world war, a number of functions had been taken away from local government and transferred to various "ad hoc" bodies in the name of large-scale efficiency at the expense of the local population (Hambleton, 2008).

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts in local authorities and devolved governments occur due to many factors. The most common factors causing these conflicts in developing countries include competition for resources, lack of inclusivity, misuse of resources, corruption and bad management and ethnicity.

In Africa, most local authority governance systems were developed during the colonial rule. These were mainly concentrated in urban areas at the beginning of twentieth century and rural districts after the World War II (Wilder, 2009). Local authorities underwent changes, evident in post independence systems that became centrally controlled. Political and economic systems became a problem in rapidly growing urban areas where forces competed for scarce resources. However, from the 1990's the wave of decentralization for community participation and better service delivery swept across Africa causing conflicts in local authorities. In decentralized systems central governments could have resisted devolution of powers over budget and decisions resulting to competition for resources and control with local governments. For instance, in South Africa, community participation was recognized in the constitution cap (152) 1(e). It clarified different roles for all stakeholders.

In Kenya, Local Government existed before independence, drawn by the Governor as the Local Government Regulations of 1963 and incorporated in the constitution of the Republic of Kenya of 1963. Councils fell under Regional Assemblies controlled by Ministry of local Government. Local Authorities managed and maintained public utilities like primary education, health and roads in properly defined places (smoke 1994). The Ministry of Local Government (MLOG) in Kenya was headed by a Cabinet Minister who created and supervised the activities of Local Authorities. Local Government system was initially established by the Local Government regulations of 1963 (Smoke and Stamp, 2009). This was effected in 1977 when the Local Government Act, Cap 265 of the laws of Kenya was established by the National Assembly (GoK Cap. 265).

The Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) tended to assume functions of colonial native authorities which brought tensions between MoLG and Local Authorities. They contradicted between functions of Local Authorities and MoLG, thus lack of autonomy and independence of LAs, sometimes caused conflict between officers. LA reported to the minister for Local Government yet it was expected to comply with provincial administration requirements; this brought about confusion and lack of accountability. There was political interference where political parties influenced actions of councilors. This resulted to sharp political divisions as councilors' preoccupation was gaining political advantage over opponents (Muia, 2005).

Conflicts had been a common phenomenon in the structures and formal/informal institutions developed in society. At the local government level, conflicts were distinguished as resource, power, political and identity. Most developing countries were facing the problem of insufficient resources. It became more sensitive to distribute these scarce resources resulting to many conflicts witnessed in the struggle for existing limited resources.

Murang'a County Council (MCC) was one among rural local authorities found in Kenya. At post independence period, Murang'a was among the most successful rural local authorities. It used to raise revenue from agricultural products especially coffee where MCC was allowed by Local Government to charge 3% cess (ad Volorem tax) on coffee sales. MCC was doing well than other local authorities therefore provided services meant for Central Government like roads, education and health to an extent of having budget surpluses (Smoke, 1987, 1989, 1987 report on LA finances). In 1988, coffee Cess was standardized to 1%, this led to a reduced revenue base which impacted on service delivery since murang'a county council was over dependent on coffee cess. Establishment of Murang'a Municipal Council from MCC 1988 and Maragwa, Kangema, Kandara and Makuyu urban councils in 1989 reduced revenue resource base from Murang'a County Council (Smoke 1989). Kandara Urban Council was upgraded to Kandara Town Council in 1998 and became autonomous unit with a reduced resource base (Kandara Town Council 2012 strategic plan). In a bid to outsource revenue, Kandara Town Council increased taxes/rates and licenses; this led to conflict with traders, land lords and over land allocation. MCC also faced conflicts in terms of local control, power among politicians, land and transfer of essential utility services to Local Authorities (Hansard 29/12/1981 v 12, 14/7/2004, Weekly Review 1983 Jan 28 & Feb 18).

Conflicts in Murang'a centered around political supremacy, (Weekly Review 1980-11/4:7-8/18/4:9/25/4:9-10). According to the weekly Review of 4/1/1980:9, civic politics in Murang'a District conformed to major political divisions that existed since independence. At independence there were two key constituencies in Murang'a district: Kandara under veteran political detainee Bildad Kaggia, a radical and Julius Gikonyo Kiano a liberal. Murang'a district politics revolved around the struggle for dominance between two camps which included: the Gikonyo Kiano group and the opponent camp. Weekly Review 16/11/1979:14 claimed that soon after independence, Murang'a politics were dominated by Kandara MP Bildad Kaggia who came from detention and stole the show from Kiano who represented Murang'a since 1957. The fiery Kaggia became the chairman of KANU and dominated Murang'a politics to the chagrin of the youthful and better educated Kiano until 1966 when Kaggia crossed the floor and joined the opposition. Kiano took KANU leadership and dominated Murang'a politics unchallenged until 1969 when Mwangi Gachago was elected Makuyu MP unseating Pharis Wachira who was Kiano's closest ally. Gachago embarked on laying the foundation for a strategy to end Kiano's dominance in Murang'a. Gachago aligned with Mwicigi- Kandara MP who replaced Taddeo Mwaura-pro-Kiano who took Kandara leadership when Senate merged with House of Representatives. In 1974 all Murang'a MPs ganged against Kiano except Joseph Kamotho from Kangema and declared Kiano's ouster from party leadership in 1975, which saw new grass root leadership in 1976 party elections (Weekly Review,

28/11/1980:7-8). New forces joined anti-Kiano group: Matiba and Michuki replacing Kiano and Kamotho as sub branch chairmen of KANU. In 1979 Kiano lost Mbiri to Matiba in a grueling battle (weekly Review 9/11/1979:7). Kiano's defeat marked the beginning of the end of dominance of Murang'a politics by Kiano camp. The situation in Kandara was a replica of the rest of Murang'a district as reflected in political developments since independence where political supremacy was portrayed in the power struggle between veteran politician Bildad Kaggia (Kandara), a former political detainee who advocated radical policies and Gikonyo Kiano, a liberal from Kangema. (Weekly Review 1980 Nov 28).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The Research study was guided by Conflict Theories by Azzar, Mills, Burton and Karl Marx. A number of theories have been put forward by thinkers and scholars of conflict and peace studies. These theories sought to explain and justify conflict as a social phenomenon as well as common characteristic of human beings. Blackwell Malden and Van den Bergh (1965) presupposed that conflict or struggle between individuals or groups with opposing interest or competing for scarce resources was the essence of social life, competition and conflict occurred over many types of resources in many settings but power and economic resources were the principle sources of conflict and competition, conflict and struggle resulted in individuals and groups dominating and controlling others and patterns of domination tended to be self perpetuating. Dominant social groups disproportionately influenced the allocation of resources and the structure of society. The above helped in understanding the nature of local authorities that existed in Kenya.

Mills (1916-1962) derived from the ideas of Karl Marx who saw social life as competition and focused on the distribution of resources, power and inequality. Karl Marx believed society was a dynamic entity constantly undergoing change driven by class conflict. Mills in conflict perspective viewed life as competition and society being made up of individuals competing for limited resources. Broader social structures and organizations reflected competition for resources and inherent inequality. In modern Approaches to conflict theory, Mill viewed social structures as created through conflict between people with differing interests and resources. Individuals and resources were influenced by those structures and by unequal distribution of power and resources in society. The above theory helped identify nature and extent of conflicts.

Edward Azar's (1990) Theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) emphasized on the preconditions for transformation of conflict which included: communal content needs deprivation, governance and state's role and international linkages. Azar noted that relationship between identity groups and state are at the core of the problem which he referred to as disarticulation between the state and society. He also identified deprivation

of human needs as the underlying source of PSC which entails; grievances resulting from needs deprivation expressed collectively, failure to redress the grievances by authority cultivates PSC. Needs are ontological and non-negotiable hence conflict likely to be intense, vicious and from Clausewitzian perspective, irrational. Azar further cited Governance and States role as crucial factors in satisfaction or frustration of individual and identity group's needs. While the state is endowed with the authority to govern and use force to regulate society, protect citizens and provide collective goods, most states were characterized by incompetent, parochial, fragile and authoritarian governments that failed to satisfy human needs. The above theory helped to demonstrate the impact of conflict on service delivery and resource mobilization

John Burton (1998) referred to human needs as "ontological needs" and regarded them as a consequence of human nature, which were universal and would be pursued regardless of the consequence. Human needs theory came from variety of disciplines: biological and socio biological where conflict is perceived as resulting from competition over scarce resources as a result of common needs. In social psychology Henry Murray, Eric Fromm (1900-1980) and Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) described needs as important in understanding factors in human motivation. Burton defines ontological needs as non-negotiable values offering limited opportunity for negotiation and interests as negotiable issues. He defined conflict as action over these non-negotiable human needs whereas dispute was over negotiable values. Burton sees conflict resolution solving deep seeming intractable issues whereas settlement addresses superficial factors of conflict. However, Burton's notion of needs was criticized by cultural anthropologists and relativist who were resistant to universal values like Kelvin Avruch and Peter Black. Despite the criticism, Burton had many supporters who applied his methods in international conflicts like Herbert Kelman, Edward Azar and Vamik Volkan. The study applied the above theory to indicate effectiveness of mechanisms available for conflict resolution.

2.1 Empirical review of related literature

Nature of local authorities

Local Government was a system of public administrative set up under an Act of affairs and provided services. LG also administered local areas as delegates of central government where the minister for Local Government ensured that local authority followed rules and functions parliament L.G. (Act. Cap. 265) which recognized need to administer local problems, local laid down in local government Act cap 265. (Akivaga, Kulundu, Bitonye and Opi 1985)

Mboga (2009) stipulated that LGs were strategic institutions for the provision of basic socio-economic and environmental services. Their position made them valuable and viable for providing effective and efficient services to the community. They also provided platforms where communities exercised

their democratic rights by electing representatives who coordinated provision of local services by making cities and towns livable through provision of services mandated by statutes that established them.

In Germany, legislative and policy making powers lay with federal level, whereas implementation and administrative functions were left to Lander. The Local Government had two layer structures consisting of municipalities and counties which operated on multifunction formula which comprised local self government and delegated state functions (Wolman, 2000). That differed with the Kenyan system where local Authorities were subjected to the minister of Local Government (Akivaga et al, 1985) Municipalities were the smallest administrative units ruled by elected council, executive mayor and uniform constitution. In the 1960-70, administrative and modernization reforms were accompanied by heavy conflicts between Lander and local opponents in bid to cut number of municipalities and counties.

In Uganda, like many African countries LG had evolved through phases, Lubanga (2005) explained that before colonial administration, LG ranged from monarchial centralized system of Buganda to decentralized non kingdom areas. Colonial system saw parallel central government administration under DC. Independence period presented a local government with curtailed powers by CG in the guise that LG were breeding grounds for opposition, strained relationship (Villadsen, Lubanga, 2005). NRM government 1986 introduced decentralization with national resistance councils and committees and suspended key centralizing provisions of 1969 local Administration Act (Kisakye, 2000). This contradicted with Kenya's transfer of functions back to the central Government (MCC annual report, 1969-1970)

Kenya attained her independence under a Quasi federal system of government with seven semi-autonomous regional governments and a central government. However, KANU-the ruling party embarked on power consolidation in the 1960s to prevent minority ethnic groups from building local power bases (Smoke, 1993:902). Mitulla (2003) puts it that constitutional amendments of 1964 & 69 dismantled regionalism replacing it with provincial administration as instrument of central government control at the grassroots, through transfer of critical functions to central government (Transfer of functions Act 1970). That curtailed the autonomy of councils by granting supervisory powers to minister of LG, financially crippled local authorities by closing sources of revenue and allowing control over local authority council (Muriu, 2012) National leaders argued that central control was required to promote unity and enhance rapid development (Smoke, 1993, 2003:902).

Most local authority governance systems in Africa were developed during colonial rule in urban areas at the beginning of 20th century and rural districts after World War II (Smoke 1994). In his research Muia (2005) found that in Kenya local

governments transitioned through three phases-pre-colonials, post independence-and republican- constitution. In British colonies, local institutions established at the beginning of colonialism operated as extensions of colonial government (Smoke 1994) under local authority ordinance of 1912. Chiefs were appointed to lead local councils (Akivaga et al (1985). The Local Native Ordinance of 1924 and Local Native Councils 1925 collected local taxes and provided services. Muia (2005) noted that in Kenya during colonial times, there co-existed two tier systems with Local Authorities for natives (reserves) and for settlers subject to central government administration (Akivaga et al, 1985, Smoke, 1993, 1994).

According to Githumo (1981) colonial government failed to demonstrate a sense of responsibility in devising effective economic programs in African occupied rural areas, instead, they weakened the foundation of African economy by stealing the most enviable land and renegeing on an earlier European argument of developing Kenya in a way that could enable her meet economic needs of all races. Immediately after independence 1963 the new Local Government legislation removed the two tier system of local government. The enactment of the Local Government Act cap 265 of 1977 eroded most of the autonomy experienced by local authorities (Muia 2005).

The 1964 republican constitution vested most of the powers to regional assemblies on the minister for Local Governments that created undue dominance and control of Local Authority where the government was to provide reliable revenue sources and central government grants. The government transferred major services and source of funds from Local Authority to central government except in major municipalities (Muia 2005). That was evident in transfer of education, health services and roads from Murang'a County Council (Kenya National Archives MCC Annual Report 1969-70). By 1974 local authority had become weakened. According to Koti (2000) the Local Government system was initially established by Local Government Regulations of 1963 (Smoke 1994, Stamp 1986) and effective until 1977 when LG Act, cap 265 of the laws of Kenya was established by the national assembly. By 1985 government grants to major municipalities were abolished placing financial burden on Local Authority (Muia 2005)

Lumumba (2004) pointed out that the structure of LG was rooted in the LG regulations of 1963 with subsequent amendments that appeared as LG Act-cap 265 of the laws of Kenya. LG System comprised four types of LA under LG Act and its amendments of 1978, 1979, 1982, 1984, 1988 (GOK cap 265, 1986, Oyugi 1983, Smoke 1994 (UNDP, 2009). He further noted that the cities of Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu were treated as municipalities as their status, duties and functions were not defined into legislation, though city of Nairobi was established by charter. Both rural and non-rural areas were de-concentrated central government organs alongside those of LG, i.e. provincial administration and technical functional departments and ministries. Municipal

council headed by mayor were established in large urban areas providing diverse services, exercised more power than town and urban councils due to large resource bases (Gok cap 265 1986). Town councils governed smaller towns but discharged similar services as municipal council (Akivaga et al 1985, Smoke 1994, Stamp 1986). County Council were identical to the districts which were administrative subdivisions of CG, had reduced responsibilities since 1970s transfer of function to the CG (Oyugi 1983, Stamp, 1986, Kenya national Achieves-1969-70, MCC annual report 1969-70).The literature on the nature of Local Authorities was to help our understanding of the structure that existed up to March 2013.

2.2 *Functions of Local Authorities.*

LG were strategic institutions for the provision of basic socio-economic and environmental services. Being the grass root units, their position made them valuable and viable for providing effective and efficient services to the community which included commerce, management, political services (UN HABITAT, 2004, Mboga, 2009).Conversely Oyugi (1973) through Extractionist Theory stipulated that nothing could take place at local level without intervention of CG which promoted maximal utilization of scarce local resources

LG acted within powers delegated to them by legislation or directors of higher level government. For instance, in Britain, Local Government was responsible for promotion of economic, social and environmental wellbeing, waste management, education, libraries, social services, transport, strategic planning consumer protection, housing and licensing. In Germany local authority administered programs authorized by federal or state government e.g. youth, schools, public health, social assistance (Bonker, Wollman, 2000). Municipalities were guaranteed right to regulate all affairs of local community i.e. public services and public utilities e.g. water supplies, sewerage, waste disposal, public transport, electricity & gas, banks (Von Saldem, 1999). LG was involved in cultural matters i.e. local theatres, orchestras, museums, public libraries, adult evening schools (Glasser, 1999).The research aimed at finding out kind of services rendered to the public by Kandara Town Council

In Nigeria, functions of LGA were spelt out in the constitution which included; planning and development of state, collection of rates establishment and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for destitute, establishment, maintenance and regulation of markets, construction and maintenance roads, streets, drains public highways, naming roads/ streets/ houses as well as registration of births/ deaths/ marriages. Also worked with government in provision and maintenance of primary education, development of agriculture and natural resources, exploitation of minerals, provision and maintenance of health services

In Kenya, LA were supposed to provide democratic practices through public participation in, resource mobilization and management. However, most residents were unaware of their

role in LA, thus low level of interaction and communication between LAs and service seekers, inadequate information relating to activities of the council (Odhiambo, Mitulla and Akivaga 2005).This research was intended to find out the extent of public awareness of their role in local authorities. Oyugi (1973) agree with their views when he argued that in developing countries there was no grassroots democracy since the ruling class was concerned with attainment of political conformity with central government hegemony over local communities and institutions. That was evident in Kenya government political control through provincial administration.

Odipo et al (2005) emphasized that the main role of LA was to plan and protect well being of residents through service delivery destined in the statute which were: collection of revenue and resource mobilization, management and allocation of revenues, delivery of services like waste management and water supply .However, Wunsch (1996) contended that citizens' local development plans at the grassroots were passed upwards and integrated into regional and national plans where national priorities were selected at the expense of local activities. He further reiterated that so long as capital investment budget was controlled by national ministries, local priorities would be ignored which would lead to erosion of local authority.

That complimented the fact that the Local Government Act gave the Minister for LG the discretion to the management of LA in the appointment of key officers i.e. county and town clerks. Here the degree of independence and autonomy was policy issue, evident when minister for LG stated that he could dissolve Nairobi City Council and replace it with commissions (Odipo et al 2005). LG Act empowered minister to make orders, directives, rules as needs dictated. Non compliance entitled minister to appoint a commission to run LA (LG Act sec 252, Akivaga, 1985, RoK, 2007, Southall, 1996).

Smoke (1989) reiterated that several Acts of parliament including Local Government Act. Rating Act, Valuation for Rating Act and Regional Assembly Act gave Local Authorities right to raise income from variety of sources. For example rents, taxes, user fees, licenses, central government grants subject to approval by minister for LG. Though LG had legal rights to revenue sources, service delivery and revenue generation remained an issue since there were unsatisfactory guidelines and procedures for setting tax rates and user fees charged by LA (Smoke 1989, Muia 2005).The minister for local government could delay in decision making on modification of local revenue sources whereas central government agencies competed for revenue sources with local government, at the same time local political pressure reduced ability to collect revenues portrayed through intervention by councilors seeking re-election. The study intended to find out the impact of political interference on revenue collection in Kandara Town Council.

Oyugi et al (2008) pointed out that due to deterioration of service provision by LA, the government under wider public sector restructuring established Kenya Local Government Reforms Program (KLGPR) to restructure local public sector and improve local service delivery, improve financial management and accountability, hence establishment of Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) (Oyugi, Muia, 2005). Muia (2005) added that disbursement of LATF was pegged on councils meeting certain performance conditions which entailed development of Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP). The study intended to find out to what extent the local population was involved in planning.

2.3 *Conflicts in Local Authorities*

Local Government refers to specific institutions or entities created by national constitutions, central governments state legislation or executive order. The main duty was to deliver a wide range of specified services to relatively small geographically delineated area (Barasa, 2009). Most of them were dual structured however, the duality led to Central Government vis-a vis local authority control which led to competition for scarce resources, power, identity and interest resulting to conflict (Hambleton, 2008). According to Kingdom (1991), Britain had unitary government where all local authorities were subordinate to Central Government leading to tension and disagreements. Central-local relationship portrayed conflicts of interest where central government curtailed expenditure while LA insisted on expansion of expenditure. It further portrayed conflict in responsibility of services as ministers conflicted with LA officials since both claimed responsibility for services (Hambleton, 1978, Kingdom, 1991). In Germany, LA were characterized with political conflicts where elected councils were against the major dual structure. Reforms and Modernization were major contributions to heavy conflicts during amalgamations of municipalities and counties (Norton, 1994, Wolman, 2000)

MacDougal (2010) pointed out that Japan's Local Government experienced changes as society became complex. The need for public sector response to social and economic problems and tendency to concentrate power at the centre brought friction between centre and local government. Changes accompanied by significant amount of conflict i.e. environmental protest movements, sit in by residents to impede public construction projects: airports and incinerator plants. Advocacy groups (lawyers and Doctors) pressed national and Local Authorities of the new policies protecting ministry or weak members of society. Cohesive relationship replaced by conflicts as national authorities attacked local initiatives in pollution control and land use guidelines for real estate developers.

In Africa, according to Wunsch (1996) conflicts occurred in key functions of local government due to persistence of actors at the centre to retain authority and resources which when transferred to the Local Government, the Central Government recaptured resulting to recentralization. Explicit is the Central

Vis-a Vis Local Government control over budget, annual plan or decision making, absence of local political process led to reassertion of central control while the locality recaptured resources which reverted to recentralization, hence disempowering the grassroots (Wunsch, 2001, Oyugi, 1990)

South Africa had two tier systems where the duality could have caused conflict over resources (Galvin, 1997). Sontenen (2009) cited lack of autonomy as Local Government was subjected to national and provincial government as well as traditional authorities. He further observed that decentralization occurred in parallel causing overlaps, confusion, ambiguity, high transaction cost and conflict. Political authorities with downward accountability to electorates coexisted and conflicted with decentralized service delivery. Additionally, multiple decentralization brought conflict between new local government and traditional authorities (Galvin, 1997).

In Uganda, Local Government constituted by the state under decentralization was used as instrument to consolidate hold over districts reducing national level conflicts, replacing them with local level conflicts explicit in the concentration of power at the district level that led to struggle over district positions (Kisakye, 2000, Villasden & Lubanga, 2005). According to Brancati (2006) decentralization increased political participation, encouraged regional and ethnic political parties which led to more conflict (Mutebi, 2009).

Immediately after independence in Kenya, new local government legislative removed the two tier system. Act cap 265 of 1977 eroded most of the autonomy experienced by the Local Government (Muia 2005). 1964 republican constitution vested most of the powers of the regional assemblies on the Minister for Local Government, thus undue dominance and control. The government transferred major services and funds from Local Government to CG except in major municipalities evident in Murang'a County Council 1970. Major services like education, health roads were transferred back to CG (MCC Annual Report 1969-70, Muriu, 2012). By 1974 local authority had been weakened. According to Mawhood, The 1982 District Focus for Rural Development was a form of decentralization aimed at tightening of central control and reducing LG to a state of crises where numerous services collapsed (Chitere & Ileri, 2008, Southall & Wood, 1996) By 1985 government grants to major municipalities were abolished placing financial burden on Local Authority a situation that has persisted (Smoke, 1989).

The Kenya Constitution 2010 provides for two levels of government (National and County) with cities and urban areas operating under counties (Cap II sec 184). It is worth noting that constitution 2010 brings in a system with structural overlaps. This is because cities and urban areas within councils may conflicts in transfer of functions and resource allocation.

Personalities that influenced Murang'a politics

According to Wanjohi (1984) Kenya attained Independence in 1963 amidst a cloud of confusion about ideological and development path she would follow. The confusion led to intensive political debate which tended to categorize the contestants into leftist and pro-western rightist. In Murang'a District the main leftist-pro-western conflict was championed by Bildad Kaggia and J.G.Kiano respectively. According to the weekly Review 4/1/1980:9, civic politics in Murang'a District conformed to major political divisions that existed since independence. At independence there were two key constituencies in Murang'a district: Kandara under veteran political detainee Bildad Kaggia, a radical ideologically committed and disagreed with Kenyatta Government policy that required former European farms be allocated to Africans on the bases of purchase and Julius Gikonyo Kiano a liberal whose interest was boosting personal political dominance in the district and recognition as national power broker, hence supported the Government on land issue. Murang'a district politics revolved around the struggle for dominance between the two camps.

Weekly Review 16/11/1979:14 claimed that soon after independence, Murang'a politics were dominated by Kandara MP Bildad Kaggia who came from detention and stole the show from Kiano who represented Murang'a since 1957. The fiery Kaggia became the chairman of KANU and dominated Murang'a politics to the chagrin of the youthful and better educated Kiano until 1966 when Kaggia crossed the floor and joined the opposition. Kiano took KANU leadership and dominated Murang'a politics unchallenged until 1969 when Mwangi Gachago was elected Makuyu MP unseating Pharis Wachira who was Kiano's closest ally. Gachago refused to be bossed about by Kiano and embarked on laying the foundation for a strategy to end Kiano's dominance in Murang'a. Gachago aligned with Mwicigi- Kandara MP who replaced Taddeo Mwaura-pro-Kiano who took Kandara leadership when Senate merged with House of Representatives. The struggle was purely on personality emphasizing absence of ideological commitment on Kiano and uncompromising thirst for district power on the other hand (Wanjohi, 1984).

Formation of GEMA had destabilizing effect on Murang'a District as the association's leadership sought to head the district political arena, According to the weekly Review 1980 Nov 28:7-8 Mwicigi strategized to have Kiano ousted from GEMA chairmanship since Kiano being chairman of GEMA and KANU made his political stronghold in Murang'a unassailable. Mwicigi's group aligned with kikuyu businessmen and politicians set to wrest GEMA leadership by alleging that GEMA should not be a political organization, therefore chairmanship goes to someone with no political ambitions. This resulted to Kiano losing district GEMA leadership. Anti-Kiano group (Mwicigi ,Gachago ,Michuki, Matiba) consolidated in GEMA and used it as power base to remove Kiano from party leadership

In 1974 all Murang'a MPs ganged against Kiano except Joseph Kamotho from Kangema and declared Kiano's ouster from party leadership in 1975, which saw new grass root leadership in 1976 party elections using GEMA strategy(Weekly Review, 28/11/1980:7-8).New forces joined anti-Kiano group: Matiba and Michuki replacing Kiano and Kamotho as sub branch chairmen of KANU.but unsuccessfully challenged him in his Mbiri constituency sparking trouble which made Kiano to institute counter attacks ,mounted defenses and alliances(Wanjohi 1984) In 1979 Kiano lost Mbiri to Matiba in a grueling battle (weekly Review 9/11/1979:7).Kiano's defeat marked the beginning of the end of dominance of Murang'a politics by Kiano camp. According to Wanjohi(1984),having been in politics since independence Kiano had developed political arrogance and complacency, while his entire performance of underdevelopment was questioned as he paid too much attention to his interest in Murang'a leadership at the expense of growth in mbiri.

The fall of Kiano 1979 set the pace for clean up in 1983 elections where the wind of change was blowing in Murang'a.(Wanjohi,1984) explicitly noted that in Kandara , Mwicigi's 1979 victory was successfully challenged and disqualified from re-election safe for the 1983 presidential pardon. In Mbiri Matiba fought a battle he tended to ignore however, was reminded arrogance could be politically costly as citizens seemed to reject class politics. In Makuyu ,Nduati Kariuki seemed to safe the constituents from the Kiano based rivalry that costed the area of growth in social and economic wellbeing which led to massive poverty in the area .Election of Nduati Kariuki a member of business class raised the question whether change in rural areas can be realized without urban leadership .Kangema changed its MP in a hotly contested election between Kamotho and Michuki who won as class interests influenced the electorates(weekly Review 1983/1:28) .He further noted that three key Murang'a constituencies were under GEMA leadership while the other two were taken by business class that was no better than GEMA leaders. This saw Murang'a fully conquered by the wealthy politically, bringing an end to politics of old colonial nationalism-ushering in new class based politics.

The situation in Kandara was a replica of the rest of Murang'a district as reflected in political developments since independence where political supremacy was portrayed in the power struggle between veteran politician Bildad Kaggia (Kandara) a former political detainee who advocated radical policies and Gikonyo Kiano, a liberal from Kangema. Kandara politics are closely tied up with politics of the rest of murang'a district reflected in political developments of other constituencies (Weekly Review 1980 Nov 28:7-8).According to Wanjohi (1984) 1964-66 merger of the senate and House of Representatives and revision of constituency boundaries to accommodate senators being deployed as MPs in the National Assembly saw evolution of political configuration of Murang'a district. The 1966 resignation of Kaggia from KANU ushered in Taddeo Mwaura in Kandara whereas Kiano

assumed KANU chairmanship and Murang'a district spokesman as well. 1969 Mwicigi elected as Kandara MP, He aligned with Mwangi Gachago, cooperated with Matiba and Michuki in strategizing the ouster of Kiano from Murang'a leadership

2.4 Conflict Management in Local Authorities

Conflict management involves implementing strategies to limit negative aspects of conflict and increase positive aspects at a level equal to or higher than where conflict is taking place. Conflict management is aimed at enhancing learning and group outcomes (Moix, 2007). Lederach (2005) conflict management sustainable transformative approach entails reframing situations. That is creating new context in which people attack problems rather than each other (UNDP, 2007). For instance, Britain after 1980 passed legislation to oblige Local Authority to expose service delivery to market testing through compulsory competitive tendering. By 2000, best value regime came into operation where councils were to make best value performance plan. All functions of an authority were subject to inspection every five years (Wilson & Game 2002).

In Germany, despite the federalism, measures were put in place to manage the myriads of conflicts in local authority. For instance, there was decentralization of resource management and responsibility to overcome top down hierarchy, cost achievement, accounting and controlling systems. Output oriented and Lump sum (global) budget aimed at directing political attention on big decision in local policy making. Additionally delivery of public services, utilization and public facilities was guided by marketization and privatization, emphasis on democracy and local referendums (Wolman, 1999 Bogumil, 2001).

In Japan, MacDougal (2010) stipulated that conflictual period resulted to inclusion of neglected groups and interests as objects of public policy and participation in policy process. Likewise city hall established channels of communication with local residents. Additionally national systems relied on regional or local leaders to translate central plans to reality hence decentralization. Consultative organs of LG attached to the executive enhanced increased citizen participation through recruitment and selection (Local Autonomy law art 138, Ohsugi, 2009). The study intended to find out available mechanisms for resolving conflicts in Kandara Town Council

In sub-Saharan Africa, decentralization as an instrument of conflict management mitigated, exacerbated and even transformed conflicts. Maxton (2009) reiterated that other than improving service delivery, multiple decentralization brought conflicts between local government authority and traditional authorities in South Africa. Diprose and Ukiwo (2008) noted that in Nigeria, the 1996 constitution, decentralization led to marginalization, identity politics and dominance in LG by certain communities. This ameliorated or exacerbated to historic grievances that led to inter group domination and horizontal inequalities that impacted on

service delivery and growth. On the other hand decentralization provided opportunities for expression of diversity, better attention to local needs, indirectly interacted with conflict dynamics by stimulating changes in the population through sub-national splitting of administrative units providing for local autonomy and participation to decision making through direct elections.

In Uganda Kisakye (2000) asserted that decentralized local governments helped to reduce national level conflicts and replaced them with local level conflicts. Brancatic (2006) claimed that in Uganda, while decentralization increased political participation, it also encouraged regional and ethnic political parties leading to more conflict (Mutebi, 2009). From the above, the authors failed to explore other mechanisms to resolve conflicts.

In Kenya the structure of local government portrayed conflicts from inception. Attempts to resolve these conflicts were not effective. For instance, Oyugi (1973) claimed that increased involvement at the local level could be traced back to President Kenyatta's Harambee call in 1964 and back to the land where supporting funds from CG were channeled through community development departments. This was also applied in President Moi's 1982 District Focus for Rural Development, that tightened central control and reduced Local authorities to a state of crisis, with collapse of numerous services (Southall & Wood, 1996, Chitere & Ireri, 2008). The recurrent failure of decentralization through the two Presidencies indicated the need for other mechanisms to solve conflicts in Local Authorities. This was addressed by the study

Oyugi (2008) argued that due to deterioration in service provision by local Authorities the government introduced the Kenya Local Government Reform Program (KLGRP) to restructure local public sector, improve local public sector expenditure management, strengthen local level accountability mechanism and overall decentralization (RoK, 2005, Barasa, 2009). The researcher evaluated conflict management strategies that were available in Local Authorities and recommended further research into the devolved system.

Summary

The literature review showed that there were no proper mechanisms for resolving conflicts in Local Authorities in Kenya especially Kandara Town Council.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study pursued quantitative and qualitative research methods. It pursued descriptive and exploratory research design

Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Kandara Town Council, Murang'a County. The location is 50 Kilometers from Murang'a Town. The main economic activity here was agriculture and business. The centers selected for this research

were easily reachable by the researcher and therefore the collection of data was convenient to the researcher. These centers include: Kiiri/ Gatheru, Gakui/ Karimamwaro, Kaguthi/ Githuya and Gathugu/ Gakarara wards

Target Population: A target population of 220 comprised of the government officials, local Government officials, Business stakeholders and members of the civil society participated in the study.

A Sample of 110 entities was selected using purposive and random sampling methods. to participate in the study as follows:

Table 3.1 Shown below represent sampled respondents from target population.

	Category	Population	Sample Size
1.	Government Officials	10	5
2.	Local government Officials	10	5
3.	Business Stakeholders	100	50
4.	Others(men & women)	100	50
	Total	220	110

Research Instruments

The study used both secondary and primary methods to collect data. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data while interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect qualitative data.

Piloting Study. A pilot study was conducted in a neutral environment with similar situation with the group under research to establish the validity of the the results and the reliability of the instruments used in the study.

Data Analysis

After the data collection the researcher coded the data and arranged it appropriately and analysed it using the SPSS tool. The qualitative data was analysed using the Content analysis methods

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter was divided into two sections. Section one presented demographic data for the subjects. The second section presented the results of the study which were organized along the research questions of the study. As such, the research questions were first posed and then the data relating to that research question was presented. This was followed by a summary statement of the conclusion of the study in regard to the research question.

4.1 Demographic data

Respondents’ demographic data is presented in the following figures.

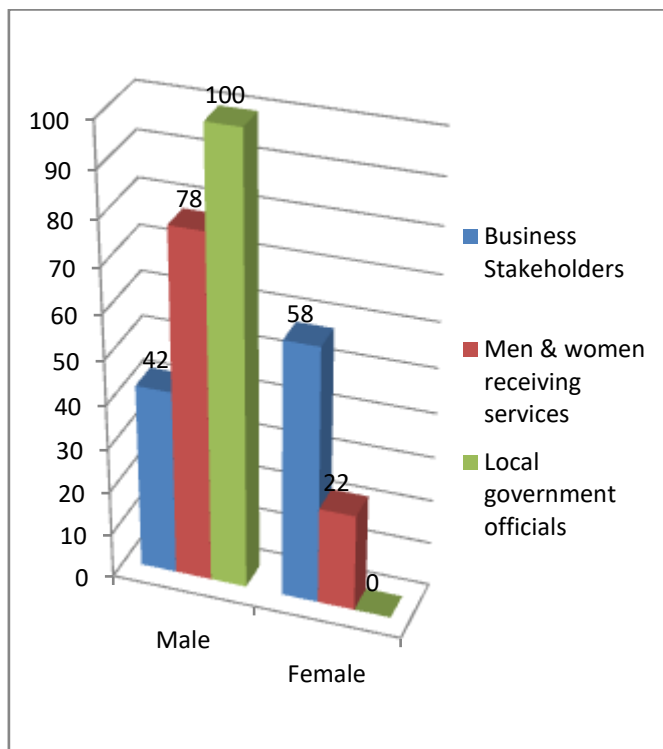
Table 4.1 Respondents by Occupation

Occupation for business stakeholders	Occupation for men and women receiving services
Businessmen Salons Cobblers Carpenters Tailors Farmers Teachers Agro-chemicals	Farmers Teacher s Human rights activists

Questionnaires – Business Stakeholders & Men & women receiving services

Respondents who participated in this study had different occupations which included farmers, businessmen, teachers and human right activist. They represented people with different occupations within the Kandara Sub County. This is an indication that the view presented cut across people of different occupations in Kandara County.

Figure 4.1 Respondents by Gender



Q- Business Stakeholders, L G Authority & Men & women receiving services

Majority of the respondents 5(100%) local government officials were male followed by 14(78%) men and women receiving services who were also male with another 4(22%) female. The business stakeholders 19(58%) were male and only 14(42%) were females.

Table 4.2 Period one has been in Kandara town

Time frame in years	No. of respondents(Business stakeholders)	%	No. of respondents (Local government officials)	%
1-5	0	0	1	20
06-10	4	12	0	0
11-15	9	27	1	20
16-20	6	18	0	0
21-25	3	10	0	0
26 and above	11	33	3	60
Total	33	100	5	100

Q- Business Stakeholders & L G Authority

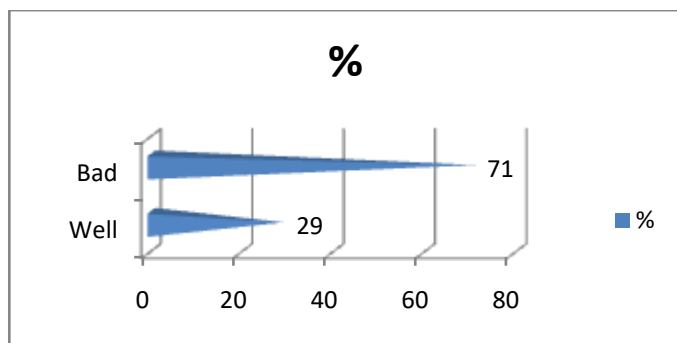
Majority of the local government official respondents 3(60%) had stayed in Kandara town 26 years and above with only 1(20%) having been there for 11 to 15 years and 1 to 5 years. Most of the business stakeholders 11(33%) had been there for 26 and above years followed by another 9(27%) and 6(18%) who had lived there for 11 to 15 years and 16 to 20 years respectively.

Table 4.3 Men & Women Respondents stay in Kandara Town Council

Time Frame in years	No. of Respondents	%
1-10	1	7
11-20	1	7
21-30	5	32
31-40	6	40
41-50	1	7
Over 50 years	1	7
Total	15	100

Majority of the men and women respondents 6(40%) had stayed in Kandara Town Council for between 31 – 40 years followed by another 5(32%) who had stayed there for between 21 – 30 years only. Another 1(7%) had lived there for 1-10, 11-20, 41-50 and over 50 years.

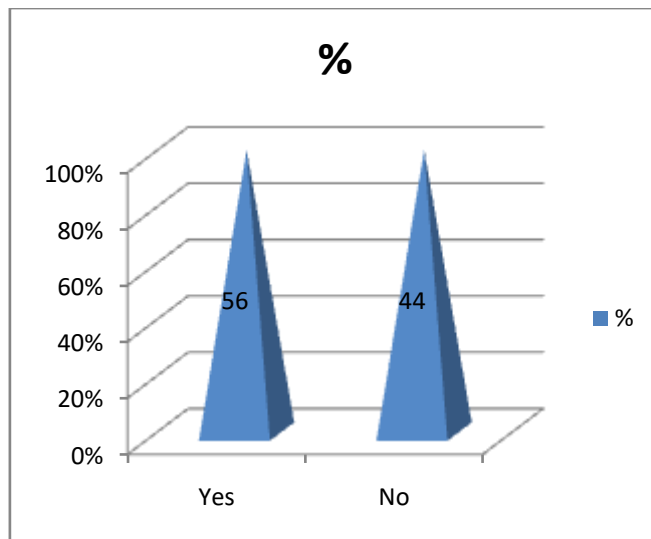
Figure 4.2 How businessmen relate to the local authority.



Q- Business Stakeholders

Most of the business stakeholders' respondents 22(71%) indicated that their relationship with the local authority council was bad. Only 9(29%) indicated that their relationship was good.

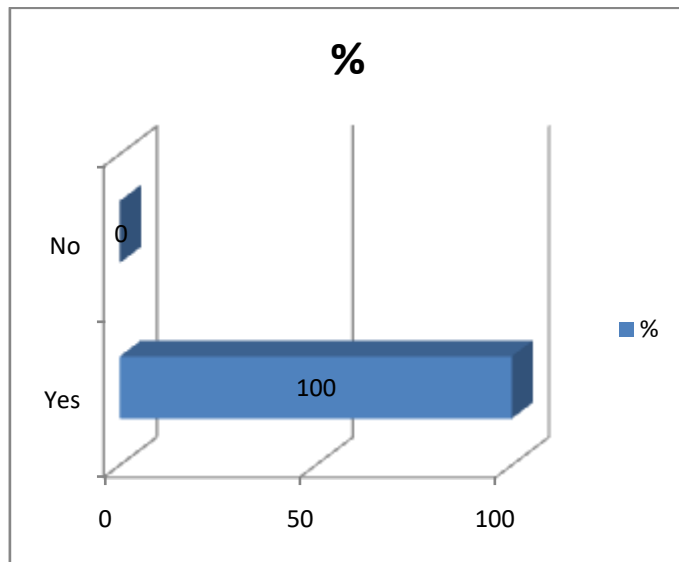
Figure 4.3 problems experienced with Kandara Town Council



Q- Business Stakeholders

Asked on whether or not they had any problems with Kandara Town Council, 18(56%) of the business stakeholders said they had while 14(44%) said they didn't have any problem with the council.

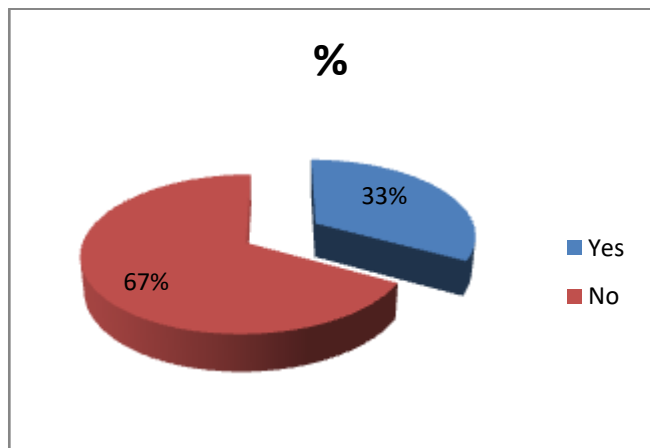
Figure 4.5 Whether or not they pay any monies to Kandara Town Council



Q- Business Stakeholders

All the business stakeholders' respondents 33(100%) indicated that they paid money to Kandara Town Council.

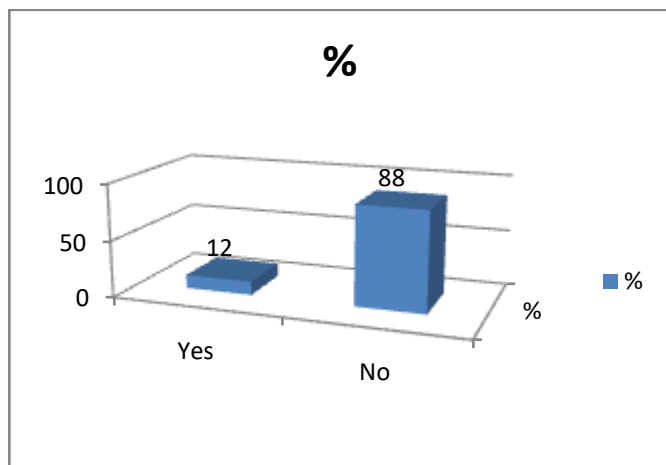
Figure 4.6 Respondents satisfied with the way money is collected



Q- Business Stakeholders

Figure 4.6 Shows that majority of the business stakeholders 22(67%) indicated that they were not satisfied with the way money was collected while 11(33%) were satisfied. This indicates anomaly in revenue collection as the traders claimed that the uniformity applied to different types of businesses was oppressive; they called for reviewed rates depending on the business type. This confirms (Smoke ,1989, Muia, 2005) that several Acts of Parliament gave LA’s right to raise income from variety of sources, however, service delivery and revenue generation remained an issue due to unsatisfactory guidelines and procedures for setting tax rates and user fees charged by LA.

Figure 4.7 Respondents’ satisfied with the services rendered by Kandara Town Council



Q- Business Stakeholders

Figure 4.7 Shows that majority of the business stakeholders respondents 29(88%) were not satisfied with the services rendered by the Kandara Town Council while 4(12%) expressed satisfaction with the services rendered. Their dissatisfaction is reflected by the diverse services demanded below which proves that no tangible services are rendered by the LA. Contrary to (UN HABITAT, 2004, Mboga, 2009)

who describe the functions of LA as provision of basic socio-economic, Political and environmental services at the grass root level. This complements Oyugi (1973) through Extractionist Theory when he stipulated that nothing can take place at the local level without intervention of the CG which promotes maximal utilization of scarce resources.

Business stake holders expected the LA to provide the following services: better sanitation, improve drainage , improved street lighting ,provide schools, make permanent roads/ maintenance of access roads, improved the security of the town, water both in the town and the market, Fencing of the open air market ,provision of dustbins, proper bridges ,provide sheds and employment within the locality. LA’s failure to provide the above services contradicts Odipo et al (2005) emphasis that the main role of LA is to plan and protect wellbeing of residents through service delivery destined in the statute.

How one relates to Kandara Town Council

Men and Women seeking services claimed that there existed poor relationship between the service seekers and the LA since the LA officials are unapproachable, never cooperates with the residents and their presence is rarely noted except when collecting revenue

Frequency of Kandara Town Council holding joint meetings with local residents

Most of the service seekers are not aware of any meetings ever convened by the LA except a few who claim to have been invited during LASDAP meetings.

Ways and means in which Kandara Town Council accounts for its projects

Services offered by the elected councilors

Service seekers not aware of any services provided by the elected councilors except assisting during fund raisers for education and hospital bills .This implies that there is a disconnect between the LA and the residents they are supposed to serve. This agrees with Odhiambo, Mitulla and Akivaga (2005) when they contended that LA was supposed to provide democratic practices through public participation in, resource mobilization and management. However, most residents were unaware of their role in LA, hence low level of interaction and communication between LA and service seekers, inadequate information relating to activities of the council. This is further confirmed by Oyugi (1973) when he reiterated that in developing countries there is no grass root democracy as the ruling class is concerned with attainment of political conformity with central government hegemony over local communities and institutions.

Questions for Local Government Officials

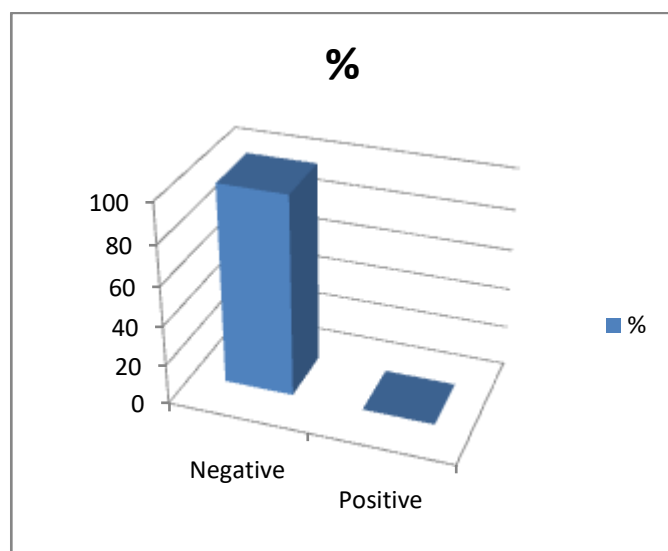
Sources of revenue

Majority of local government officials had stayed in Kandara Town for over twenty six years as shown in table 4.3. This

indicates that they are aware of the sources of Revenue in Kandara over the years which range from: licenses, rents, cess on agricultural produce from the local hawkers' market, Bus Park, LATF, land rates and slaughter house. This conforms with Smoke (1989) when he reiterated that several Acts of Parliament including the LG Act, Rating Act, Valuation Act and Regional Assembly Act gave LA's right to raise income from variety of sources.

Despite the legal rights to revenue sources, Muia (2005) cites various challenges facing LA in revenue collection among which the minister for local government delayed in decision making on modification of local revenue sources whereas central government agencies competed for revenue sources with local government, at the same time local political pressure reduced the ability to collect revenue portrayed through intervention by councilors seeking re-election. Kandara Town council was no exception; responses from local government officials depict diverse problems faced during revenue collection which included: traders not meeting their deadlines, failure by traders to pay licenses, traders refusing to pay rates due to political interference from councilors seeking political mileage over opponents, traders protesting over any reviews and disputes among fellow councilors

Figure 4.4 How traders responded to revenue collection



Q- LA officials

Figure 4.4 Shows that all LA officials (100%) indicated that response to revenue collection in Kandara Town Council was negative. The negative response could have been caused by internal or external factors which could have been social, economic and political factors.

Services offered by the Local Authority to the residents

According to Mboga (2009) LA were strategic institutions aimed at provision of basic socio-economic and environmental services. Their position as grass root units

made them valuable and viable for provision of effective and efficient services to the community which included commerce, management and political services. However, findings from the responses of LA officials reflects provision of social services which include: Leveling roads, awarding bursaries, access road maintenance, bridge construction and maintenance, sweeping in the open air market, any other service depending on availability of land, maintenance of water points, local paths, sanitation, drainage and maintenance of Kandara children's home. Above scenario in Kandara Town Council confirmed Odhiambo, Mitulla and Akivaga's (2005) views that most local residents are unaware of their role in LA. This results to low level of interaction and communication between LA and service seekers hence no information relating to activities of the council.

Ways the council involves the residents in prioritizing the projects (Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan-LASDAP)

Odhiambo et al (2005) contended that in Kenya LA was supposed to provide democratic practices through public participation in resource mobilization and management. In this research, Kandara Town Council claimed to have involved the residents through public barazas from various wards, Sought views of opinion leaders e.g. School leaders, church leaders, health center, women groups, held meetings at ward level to propose their projects, consensus meetings with select committees 5-10 members each ward, Called meetings and labor recruitment through provincial administration.

Frequency of convening meetings with local residents

The council also claimed to have held meetings once a year especially around August when Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) was disbursed and during LASDAP preparations. This complements Muia's (2005) suggestion that disbursement of LATF was pegged on councils meeting certain performance conditions which entailed development of Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan. This could imply that the select committee

Kandara Town Council claims to involve could have been used as a rubber stamp, despite the Town Council emphasis on *selecting project committee members* through grass root elections, use of provincial administration to call public barazas where locals' select own committee members, councilors mobilized residents in their wards, local residents asked to elect their representatives to committees in every ward and finally getting representatives from every committee and asking them to nominate members their representatives in the full council meeting.

Though Kandara Town is an old colonial entity, the research findings depict scarcity of *resources* which include trees, rents, licenses, land rates, hawkers' market fee collection. These *resources were allocated to the local residents through:* Councilors who presented their priorities to the local authority, through committees from every ward after

identifying their priorities. The scarcity could result to competition among councilors and also among the committee members hence inequitable distribution. This could also be compounded by the *Method of communication* used by the Town Council which entails printed notices, announcements in local churches, public barazas and hand delivery. The methods portray low level of interaction and communication between LA and service seekers leading to inadequate information relating to activities of the council (Odhiambo, Mitulla, Akivaga, 2005). This could also imply that committee members were never notified of the agenda of the meetings in advance to allow them consult with the residents prior to the meeting

Solutions to any problems encountered in Kandara town council.

The respondents suggested that any problems in Kandara Town Council could be resolved through consensus meetings among conflicting parties and chaired by the Town clerk but not the council chairperson who might be partisan. There was emphasis on dialogue within the council and consultation with past legislators on the mechanisms they applied on similar issues.

SECTION B

Table 4.4 Respondents' awareness of any disagreements among councilors

Category	Yes		No. of respondents	%
	No. of respondents	%		
Business Stakeholders	18	55	15	45
Local Government Authority	05	100	0	0
Men & Women Receiving Service	12	75	04 receiving services) Table 4.4 indicates that Majority of the respondents', 5(100%) of	25

Q- Business Stakeholders, L G Authority & Men and women

the local government Authority, 12(75%) of the men and women receiving services and 18(55%) of the business stakeholders were aware of conflicts among councilors in Kandara Town Council. Another 15(45%) of the business stakeholders and 4(25%) of men and women receiving services were not aware of any conflicts among councilors. From the above, it was worth noting that conflicts existed among councilors. The causes of these conflicts were cross cutting among the different respondents. Responses from business stakeholders indicate that conflicts among councilors could have been caused by corruption, resource allocation, power struggle, financial mismanagement, political interference, low level of education, councilors unawareness of their roles, vested interests, lack of consensus, land grabbing, greed, competition and misunderstanding. In addition to the above, Local Government officials cite lack of

ethics where councilors reveal council secrets, lack of continuity- improper transition from previous regime, interference from provincial administration and council chairmen during vote taking, double allocation of plots. Whereas men and women seeking services from the Town Council added on lack of transparency and accountability.

Above responses compared to Kandara Town Council (2012) Strategic Plan which indicated that the council became autonomous with a reduced resource base. Effort to outsource revenue through increased taxes, rates and licenses led to conflict with traders, land lords and over land allocation. This is further complimented by the (Hansard 29/12/1981, v 12, 12/7/2004, weekly Review 1983 Jan 28 & Feb 18) which depicted Murang'a conflicts in terms of local control, power among politicians, land and transfer of utility services to Local Authorities.

The above confirms Hambleton (2008) argument that the dual structure of local government led to Local Government vis a vis local authority control which led to competition for scarce resources, power, identity and interest resulting to conflict. This is further explained by (Oyugi, 1990, Wunsch, 1996, 2001) by contending that in Africa, conflicts occur in key functions of local government due to persistence of actors at the centre to retain authority and resources which when transferred to the local government, the central government recaptures resulting to recentralization.

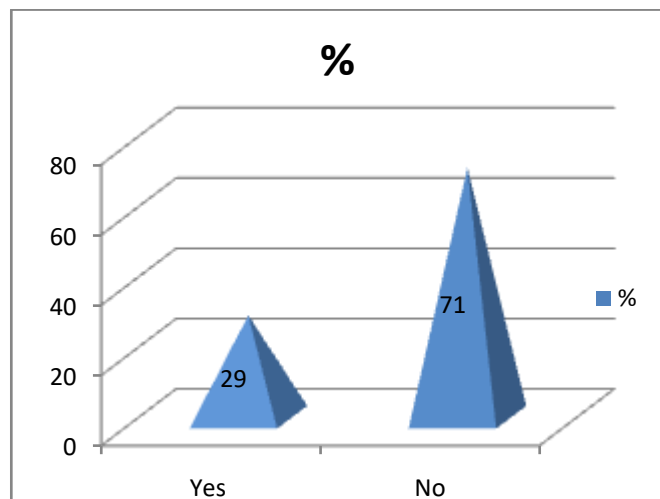
Responses on Impact of conflict cut across all the respondents.

Research findings portray a negative impact on key functions of Local Authorities which according to Mboga (2009) included: basic socio-economic, environmental, commerce, management and political services. All the respondents felt that conflicts resulted to Stagnation or stalled developments (white elephant projects) hence wastage of resources, service delivery delayed or total lack of service delivery to citizens, this led to increased corruption, Workers salaries delayed, Councilor's allowances not paid, strained relationship among councilors and workers, Revenue collection not possible leading to loss of revenue to the council, Resources allocated were returned at the end of financial year instead of being used for the intended projects.

Conflicts spilled over to local residents as they took sides with conflicting councilors resulting to divisions, it also led to areas represented by particular councilors to be neglected in terms of development while residents' grievances were not addressed and projects were being transferred to other areas. These conflicts led to closure of places of business like, hawkers' market. This resulted to loss of property. The above corroborated Wanjohi's (1984) views that having been in politics since independence, Kiano had developed political arrogance and complacency, while his entire performance of underdevelopment was questioned as he paid too much attention to his interest in Murang'a leadership at the expense of growth in Mbiri constituency.

On or not they were aware of any mechanisms put in place for solving conflicts in Kandara Town Council

Figure 4.8 Respondents awareness of mechanisms of solving conflicts-men and women receiving services



On whether the respondents were aware of any mechanisms put in place to solve conflicts in Kandara Town Council, majority 10(71%) of men & women receiving services said they were not aware of any. Only 4(29%) indicated that such mechanisms existed. While most 20(63%) of business stakeholders said they were not aware. 11(36%) indicated existence of such mechanisms. Yet 5(100%) of LG officials claimed existence of such mechanisms. From figure 4.8 above most respondents were not aware of existence of any conflict management mechanism in Kandara Town Council, whereas a few acknowledged their existence. Respondents acknowledging existence of such mechanisms cited dialogue, voting, arbitration and Making some members miss meetings and subsequently not paid their allowances. LA officials named the following mechanisms that were used in the council: Consensus, voting, adjournment of meetings to a later date, dialogue, calling crisis meetings, alienating a councilor for several months- not to attend council meetings, chairman and town clerk to counsel conflicting councilors, use set rules in LG. Act (Cap. 265), Involve provincial administration- DC or ministry of L.G conflicting councilors cut off from council deliberations or barred for a number of months or withholding councilors allowances.

Despite the mechanisms cited above conflicts continue to be manifest in local authorities especially during vote taking or council elections. This is an indicator that these mechanisms have not been effective. Contrary to Moix (2007) suggestion that conflict management aimed at enhancing learning and group outcomes. Further, Lederach (2005) conflict management sustainable transformative approach entails reframing situations by creating new context in which people attack problems rather than each other.

When asked *whether the mechanisms had been effective*, most local government officials acknowledged that, to some extent

the mechanisms had failed to address the situation, others said, the mechanisms controlled the councilors but were not long term for conflicts recurred especially during council elections every two years, whereas others boasted of mechanisms always served the immediate needs of opponents. The above response indicated that there was no permanent effective conflict management mechanism that was available in Kandara Town Council

This leads to the next item where the respondents were required to *suggest other ways of resolving conflicts*. Responses from *business stake holders* integrated with those of *other service seekers* which included: Dialogue, councilors were to liaise with the chief officer for guidance but some checks were to be put in place so that the chief officer does not mislead them. The council to have realistic budgets, Set certain level of education for councilors, chairperson should not be elected or nominated councilor since he could influence decision making. They suggested community involvement in most activities of the council, also suggested council meetings to be chaired by the local DC and should involve chief, councilors, council office bearers and plots owners.

Some residents felt that Chairman of the council to be elected by the local residents not the councilors, therefore independent while others suggested formation of sub-committees to handle different meetings within the council and be chaired by different councilors. The council could have involved professionals in specific areas to come up with appropriate solutions. Respondents also suggested that councilors to be made aware of their roles in the council and there should be proper supervision of all council activities. In addition to consensus and mediation from outsiders, there could have been use of legal procedures in courts. Priority could have been given to public utilities during funds disbursement and emphasized on accountability and transparency

On the other hand *local government officials* suggested the following as other ways that could have resolved conflicts: Proper budgeting and planning to avoid the unrealistic budgets seen in LAs. Proper transition between incoming and outgoing regime to ensure continuity, Consult with previous regime and professionals to avoid stagnation of projects, involve external assistance. Mediation, election of educated councilors, and unveiling agenda for meetings prior to the actual meeting as this could have enabled councilors to consult with the electorate.

Report on interview schedule for government officials.

This involved provincial administration in Kandara Town council who enthusiastically described their experiences with the local authority over the years. Most of them claimed to have stayed in Kandara Town Council for over thirty years. Some claimed to have had cordial relationship with Kandara Town Council while others reported a poor relationship so long as one was aware of their mandate as administrators.

When asked *whether the LA involved them in project selection*, they all claimed not to have been involved; however, they said they had been called upon to resolve conflicts between the councilors and the local residents. They also felt that the councilors were causes of conflict between local residents and the provincial administration. They also claimed to have been used as rubber stamps for LASDAPs; otherwise they worked in parallel and never cooperated. They were also used in mobilizing locals to LA meetings, labor recruitment and maintenance of order during council meetings with the residents.

The provincial administration acknowledged *existence of conflicts among councilors*. These conflicts could have been caused by politics as some councilors claim to be political representatives in the council; others cited corruption, resource distribution, leadership wrangles over supremacy lack of defined roles and misappropriation of funds among others. This could be compared to conflicts in Murang'a which centered on political supremacy (Weekly Review 1980-11/4:7-8, 18/4:9, 25/4:9-10)

On impact of conflicts, they claimed the conflicts impacted negatively on Kandara Town Council in terms of time wasted on resolving at the expense of development, absent or delayed service delivery; also claimed council approvals took so long which led to loss of revenue to LA. There was also a claim that conflicts among councilors led to Kandara children's home losing a sponsor and no development projects were initiated, some councilors went for months without any remunerations. It also created tension among councilors which spilled over to the residents; this was reflected in the animosity among residents for a long time. The report also claimed that there lacked continuity from a previous council resulting to wastage of resources, evident in stalled projects.

When asked whether they were *aware of any conflict resolution mechanisms*, most claimed not to be aware of any mechanisms put in place for resolving conflicts in Kandara Town council, there was also an interjection that councilors were untouchable therefore unquestionable. However, the District Commissioner cited the office of the provincial local government officer, the director of inspectorate and the minister for local government as some of the areas that should have been used to in resolving conflicts among councilors.

When asked to *suggest other ways that could have been used to resolve conflicts* among councilors, the respondents suggested the following; actively involving residents in most of the activities, use opinion leaders, the council should have established a code of conduct among councilors, it was also suggested that time lapse to be allowed before handling any cases of conflict among councilors as time heals. Finally it was suggested that councilors fanning conflict to be surcharged and sanctioned

Group Discussion Report

The group discussion comprised of both business stakeholders and other service seekers in Kandara Town Council. From the discussion, it was evident that most residents were not aware of the role of local authorities and the services they were entitled to. Most of the participants confessed that they elect councilors because it's mandatory during general election, others claimed to have interacted with councilors during campaign period otherwise councilors are unreachable. The participants especially the service seekers were not aware of the existence of Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) and needed an explanation from the researcher who had to distinguish between LATF fund and Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The participants claimed not to have received any services from LA but only a few acknowledged having been assisted with school fees by their local councilors and those that received bursaries claimed the amount recorded did not tally with what was received by the schools and demanded anonymity. A few individual claimed to have been involved in council meetings, whereas the majorities were not aware of any council meetings.

On awareness of conflicts among councillors,

The participants had many instances to cite when councilors confront each other publicly. They cited the *causes of these conflicts* to be leadership wrangles, resources, corruption, political interference and councilor's unawareness of their roles. When asked whether these conflicts had any impact, they had the following to tell; lack of development in the area, animosity among councilors, a lot of time wasted in resolving the conflicts, residents remain divided by the councilors instead of uniting them and on services were delivered. Participants claimed not to be *aware of any mechanisms* put in place to resolve conflicts. They *suggested the following ways of resolving conflicts*; community and professional involvement in various fields, dialogue, negotiation, council to set minimum level of education for the councilors, different committees to be chaired by different councilors.

V. FINDINGS

On objective one , the nature and extent of conflicts in Kandara Town Council the study found that most of the conflicts were caused by bad management, Poor resource allocation, misuse of resource, political differences and ethnicity lack of prudent leadership, competition for power' between different officials .

This finding agrees with assertions by Akivaga, Kulundu, Bitonye and Opi (1985) who assert that Local Government was a system of public administrative set up under an Act of affairs and provided services. Local Government also administered local areas as delegates of central government where the minister for Local Government ensured that local authority followed rules and functions parliament and Local .Government. (Act. Cap. 265) which recognized need to administer local problems, local laid down in local

government Act cap 265. The local authority represented power as it was an extension of the national government and represented influence and wealth

Mboga (2009) stipulated that LGs were strategic institutions for the provision of basic socio-economic and environmental services. Their position made them valuable and viable for providing effective and efficient services to the community. They also provided platforms where communities exercised their democratic rights by electing representatives who coordinated provision of local services by making cities and towns livable through provision of services mandated by statutes that established them.

ii- On objective two the effects of the conflicts in Kandara Town Council, the majority of the respondents agreed that the conflicts had some negative effects on their relationships with local authorities while a small majority of the respondents agreed that they had good relations with the local authority in spite of the conflicts within the Kandara town council. The actual results were as follows; Most of the business stakeholders' respondents 22(71%) indicated that their relationship with the local authority council was bad. Only 9(29%) indicated that their relationship was good. Asked on whether or not they had any problems with Kandara Town Council, 18(56%) of the business stakeholders said they had while 14(44%) said they didn't have any problem with the council.

iii- On objective three, the effectiveness of the mechanisms that were available for conflict resolution in Kandara Town Council the majority of the respondents felt that not enough steps were being taken to resolve the conflicts within the town council. Misappropriation of funds was still in place due to the conflicts. The mechanisms to resolve the conflicts should be able to change the way management matters and supervision was being conducted. Majority of the business stakeholders 22(67%) indicated that they were not satisfied with the way money was collected while 11(33%) were satisfied. Majority of the stakeholders respondents 29(88%) were not satisfied with the services rendered by the Kandara Town Council while 4(12%) expressed satisfaction with the services rendered. These shortfalls were attributed to lack of effective mechanisms to resolve the conflict within the Kandara Town Council.

iv- On objective four exploring other mechanisms for resolving conflicts in Kandara Town the study found that the squabbles among councilors were caused by narrow selfish interests based political influence, greed, and lack of understanding of the real issues facing the residents of Kandara town. To solve these selfish interests it would take a long time as it was necessary also to change attitudes. These required new approaches and new culture. The respondents expressed their views as follows. Majority of the respondents', 5(100%) of the local government Authority, 12(75%) of the men and women receiving services and 18(55%) of the business stakeholders were aware of any disagreement among

councilors in Kandara Town Council. Another 15(45%) of the business stakeholders and 4(25%) of men and women receiving services agreed that the town council councilors did not have any disagreement.

VI. CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that indeed conflicts existed in Kandara Town Council Muranga County for a long period due to many factors such as greed, corruption inefficiency, political interference, mismanagement, lack of cooperation and poor resource allocation. The researcher concludes further that the conflict in Kandara Town Council had serious effects on the revenue collection and allocation. The conflict in the Kandara Town Council also affected the level of revenue collection as the councilors were involved in squabbles most of the time. The researcher also concluded that in order to resolve the conflict in Kandara Town council there was need to make some changes in the Council administration

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i- In order to reduce the conflicts in Kandara Town Council the researcher recommends that a reorganization of the management structure of the council be conducted to assign duties and responsibilities in order to reduce the number of conflicts in Kandara. This will create workable department headed by assigned officials who are responsible for their actions and decisions. This will reduce confusion and conflicts.
- ii- In order to provide effective services to the people of Kandara Town Council, there should be adequate revenue collection, sound financial allocation and proper budget preparation so as to be able to provide effective services to the people. There should also be clear vertical accountability structure to supervise the collected revenue. This structure will create accountability and reduce any attempts for financial pilferage.
- iii- In order to improve the effectiveness of Kandara Town Council in providing services, members of the Town Council should be required to have at least a degree in order to be able
- iv- The researcher recommends that, those Councilors found to be fanning conflicts with malicious intention should be brought to book and punished for their actions.

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