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Strategies for Reconciliation of Competing Narratives on Climate Change in Morogoro District

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ABSTRACT: Tanzania, like other countries around the globe, has adopted various measures to address climate change effects. The existing initiatives show that Tanzania is committed to ensuring that implementation of climate change policies is effectively done. Such measures are plausible; however, their success depends on collective efforts of the key actors in climate action. This study aimed to identify the strategies for reconciliation of competing narratives and enhancing collective action among the key climate action actors in Morogoro District Tanzania, namely, environmental elites in Morogoro District Council, farmers and pastoralists. The study used qualitative case study design. Data were collected using in-depth face to face interviews, focus group discussions, observations, documentary reviews and questionnaire. The story telling and embodied inquiry approaches were used to elicit and analyses the indigenous and elites' stories and artefacts related to climatic changes in the district. Data were analysed using qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis. The findings revealed that, the best strategy for harmonization of climate change narratives is promotion of social integration among different ethnic groups from among farmers and pastoralists. The strategy should also include provision of appropriate climate change education to the people and improve climate friendly livelihoods strategies in local communities.

KEYWORDS: Climate change, reconciliation, narratives and strategies

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Addressing climate change has been the prevailing agenda globally (United Nation, 2022). Being part of the globe actors, Tanzania, like other countries, has adopted various measures against climatic challenges. These measures have involved adoption of the various international and national policy guidelines to enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation and strengthen resilience capacity of local communities and the country in general. Despite great deal of efforts, Tanzania and especially Morogoro District is still severely and frequently affected by climate disasters particularly floods (Internationally Monetary Fund, 2023). In his address to the Parliament of Tanzania on 25th April, 2024 regarding climate change calamities, the Prime Minister issued a statement detailing the number of deaths, injuries, and affected households (155 deaths and 236 injuries and affecting 200,000 people and 51,000 households (The Citizen, 2024).

Among the strategies to address climate challenges insisted in Tanzania is to involve different actors in local areas and IKS in climate action programs and projects. This emphasis can be seen in different climate policy documents adopted by the country, such as NAPA 2007, NCCRS 2021, and NDC 2021. Similarly, the UN climate change platforms, have emphasised recognition and integration of IKS with the climate change policies to enhance engagement of local communities in achievement of the set climate targets. Not only policy elites, but also scholars in different areas have insisted the need to incorporate IKS in climate change policies. Implied in the existing policy guidelines and the scholarly knowledge is the notion of local communities as homogeneous group with common interest and understanding towards climate change. However, the reality shows that actors in local communities do not act as a team of compatible members with common understanding and interest towards climate action. Experiences have shown that actors have knowledge and perception gaps and competing narratives which normally affect collective action in climate change policies (McGuire and Lynch, 2017).

The knowledge and perception gaps do not exist within communities only, but also between them and other external factors such as environmental elites. While the elites increasingly come into agreement about climate change, there is no assurance if the same knowledge is held by the community members (United Republic of Tanzania, 2019). The knowledge and perception gaps that seem to exist among local people and between them and scientific community cast doubt on the ability of these actors to reciprocally communicate and collectively act to

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address climate change. This study aimed to assess strategies for reconciliation of competing narratives on climate change in Morogoro District so as to promote collective action in climate change among the key actors, namely local government officials, farmers and pastoralists.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

People, seldom have a common understanding about issues, although they may affect them collectively in their lives. How actors narrate climate change scenarios and respond to climate action policies and laws reflect this assertion. One of the major factors for perception or knowledge gaps among actors in local communities is differences in indigenous knowledge systems guiding ethnic groups. Another factor is experiential differences among the ethnic groups and between them and the environmental and other elites in climate action governance. Perceptual and experiential differences have resulted to different and competing narratives about climate change among actors.

Climate Change Narratives

A narrative is a spoken or written account of a phenomenon. Or in a simple way, it can be defined as a detailed story about an event. Climate change narratives can simply be defined as "stories that define the problem of climate change and offer solutions" (Bushell, 2017) in Weston (2020). In climate change, there are various narratives and folklore mainly about climate disasters which have been transferred from one generation to another. These highlight experiences, perceptions and beliefs local people have on climate conditions and measures that can be taken to address them. By its very nature, indigenous knowledge fits to be described as a narrative as it is transmitted orally from one generation to another.

There are different narrative approaches about climate change. This study used four climate change narratives as propounded by McGuire and Lynch, (2017): (1) it's not happening; (2) it's happening but it's not related to human activity; (3) it's happening but technology will save us; and (4) it's happening and all is lost–prepare for the apocalypse. These narratives not only shape the actors' perceptions but also their actions towards climate change events.

According to McGuire and Lynch (2017), people holding the first narrative do not believe that climate is changing. Denialism as an approach to climate change is mainly held by those at odd with climate and environmental scientists who have increasingly called for global climate actions. Kauk et al., (2025) noticed negative affections among tweets denying existence of climate change, compared to those supporting it, which were found to be positive about the news. According to Kauk et al., (2025) denial is framed as a psychological defence against anxiety and life style changes associated with climate action. Deniers of climate change are also skeptical of the accuracy and intention of climate and environmental scientists in their conclusions about climate change catastrophes. There are allegations that scientists manipulate data showing climate change disaster so as to reap financial or political gains (Phuong La et al., 2024).

Apart from fear and mistrust, denial of scientific accounts of climate change also stems from religious faith, cultural beliefs and experiential knowledge about natural disasters shared by people in communities. In most parts of the world, people have their own narratives about such events framed within indigenous knowledge systems.

As argued by Mafongoya and Ajayi, (2017), indigenous knowledge is practical knowledge obtained through lived experiences of people influenced by their cultural framework. Experiences of indigenous societies on what happened and how people survived tragic natural events, provide great lessons to local people sometimes causing resistance to modern narratives on the same.

The second scenario acknowledges presence of climate change but does not believe that the change is related to human causes. The opponents of anthropogenic causes of climate change argue that planet earth has always experienced variations in climatic conditions caused by natural processes. They don't believe that the amount of carbon dioxide released from human activities is massive enough to cause climate disasters such as global warming. A study reported in Phuong La et al., (2024), conducted in 2016 showed that "approximately 40% of Americans believe it is true or possibly true that "global warming is a myth concocted by scientists". Such arguments show how addressing climate change is not a straightforward process. Based on this outlook, climate change disasters cannot be prevented by deliberate policy initiatives.

This line of thinking is common among the conservative politicians and business actors. People believing in divine powers also have great likelihood of embracing this view. These people normally call for faith based interventions such as prayers or traditional rituals to avert the disasters, rather than checking their own actions on the environment. In this case the likelihood of the people to buy the views from climate policy experts is low (Nachibil et al., 2023). IKS are closely related with traditional beliefs and faith systems of the people (Lakra, 2021). It is likely that people influenced by IKS connect climate change disasters with broader faith and belief narratives of their communities.

While the proponents use scientific data to ascertain presence of human impacts on climate change, the deniers seem to be affectionate in their arguments against scientific claims. Despite the disagreements, there is a wide consensus on human causes of climate change among the global actors.

The third narrative provides possibilities for proactive measures on climate disasters as it accepts climate change as a fact not myth and insists possibilities for human control of the changes through technological innovations. In modern times where technology is highly valued, it is easy to rash to such argument. Technological innovations, however, do not guarantee achievement of the intended outcomes. There are various human and non-human factors which may hinder their functionality. In the conference paper titled "Technology innovation and climate change mitigation: Effects and transmission channels", Amri (2023) has indicated how technological innovation as a solution to climate change is contested. According to this scholar, some studies have shown no direct impact of technological innovations on climate change.

It should be remembered that technologies introduced through top down authoritative approaches may not be well received and easily used by the people. Therefore, while holding this narrative, it is crucial to think about contextual relevancy of the transferred technologies to enhance their usage by local people.

The last but not least narrative, is an apocalyptic view which insists that climatic disasters denote ends to the world and human existence. This outlook implicates public support for environmental action because of the feeling that the climate problem is bigger than human ingenuity. The indigenous knowledge holders normally connect unusual events such as storms, floods, wild fires etc, to supernatural forces, manageable only

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through divine interventions. They think that climatic disasters are sign that, end of the world, in Kiswahili *Kiyama* is near. Unless well educated, people of this type may not pay attention to experts rules on climate change. Their efforts will be directed on prayers to their God or gods to avoid their vengeance. The policy elites holding this view normally insist radical measures such as cutting down or stopping altogether the use of fossil energy sources (Harry and Curry, 2025). This approach has faced wide criticism especially among those opposing the climate change narrative as it is considered a threat to economic development and peoples welfare.

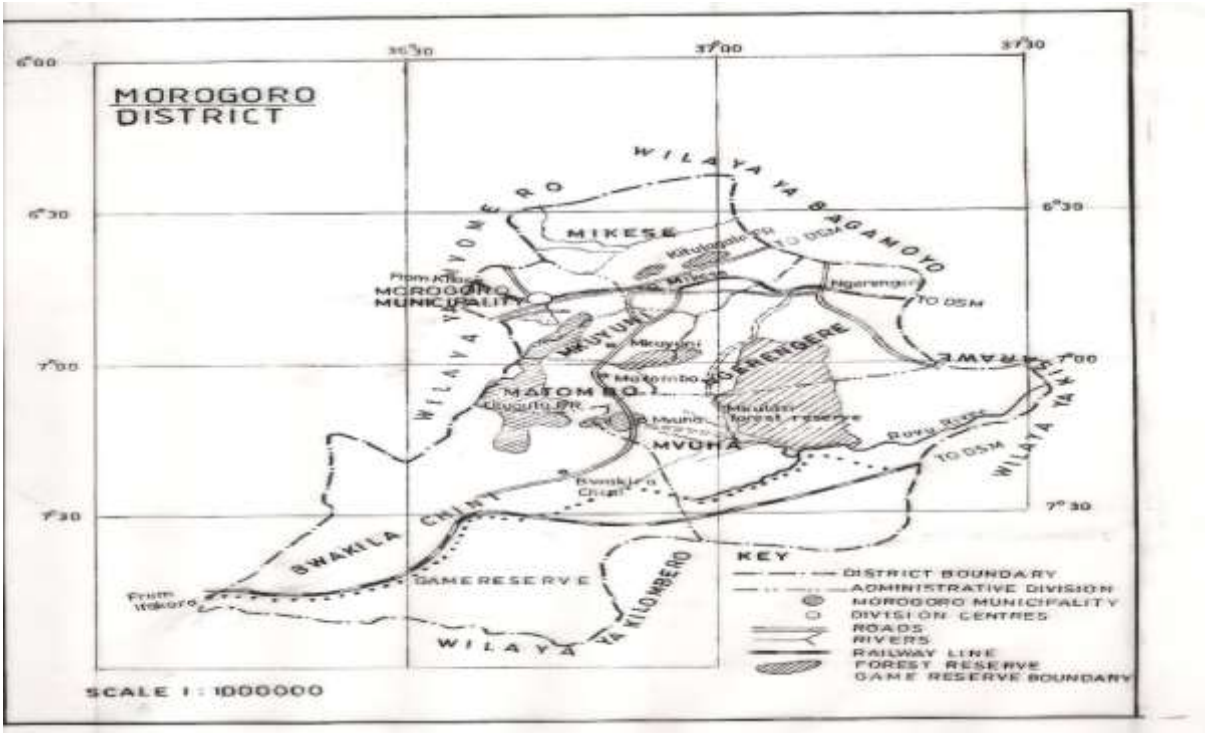
The above climate narratives provide useful insights about actors' perceptions and the resulting choices towards climate change. This paper uses these narrative fameowrks to analyse the behaviour and perception of experts, farmers and pastoralists towards climate change events and interventions adopted and implemented in Morogoro District Tanzania.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

Morogoro District is located at the North East of Morogoro Region between 6º00' and 8º00' Latitudes South of Equator and between Longitudes 36º00' and 38º' East of Greenwich. It is bordered by Bagamoyo and Kisarawe districts of the Coast Region to the East, Kilombero District to the South and Mvomero District to the North and West. The District occupies the total area of 11,731 km² equivalent to 16.06% of the total Area of Morogoro Region which has 73,039 km². (National Beaural of Statistics). The District is divided into 6 Divisions, 31 Wards, 146 Villages, 738 Neighbourhoods and 56,723 Households.

The Map of Morogoro District



Source: MDC Profile

3.1.1 Ethnicity

Morogoro District, is a multicultural community comprising various Bantu ethnic groups. The indigenous people of Morogoro District are the Luguru, Kutu, Kwere, and Mbunga. However, immigrants from other ethnic groups, primarily the Zigua, Pogoro, Ngindo, Maasai, Mang'ati, and Sukuma, also reside there. The Luguru are mostly found on the slopes of Mount Uluguru. Fertile soils, adequate rainfall, and high productivity of food and spice crops have attracted people from the Luguru tribe to live on these mountain slopes. Reports show that several attempts have been made by colonial and especially the German colonial rule, and post-colonial government to relocate the Luguru people from the Uluguru Mountains to other areas. However, people have resisted moving due to fear of hunger and drought in the lowland areas where the government planned to send them.

3.1.2 Climate Change Vulnerability

Like other areas in Tanzania, Morogoro District is highly affected by climate change disasters. The area faces two main climate change problems namely; droughts and floods. One of the great climate change disasters happened in 2024, when the district experienced heavy floods and storms associated with El Niño rains from March to April, causing deaths to people and livestock and destruction to crops, houses and other properties.

The study found that the climate change impacts emanate mainly from environmental degradation resulting from anthropogenic activities. The study revealed that the main economic activities in the area are farming, pastoralism, mixed farming, mining and trade. It was further noted that the nature of available economic and livelihood activities makes the area vulnerable to climate change impacts.

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Officials and leaders from Morogoro District Council confirmed that illegal exploitation of forest resources is rampant in the area. This poses great environmental challenges in the district. The District has been experiencing increased encroachment by those who want to harvest forest resources such as timber, trees for firewood and charcoal. As a result of massive encroachment, trees and shrubs cover is severely degraded in many areas especially those located along the main roads and commercial centers. The growth of markets for forest resources in Morogoro Municipality and the nearby regions like the Coastal, Dodoma and Dar es Salaam Regions has intensified encroachment of forest areas and illegal exploitation of forest resources. Another problem affecting the District is forest and bush fires. The destruction from forests and bush fires are common during dry seasons than wet months. It is believed that such fires are deliberately started by some farmers who want to clear land for dry season farming near water bodies or in wet low lands. Such fires are also started by pastoralists who want get fresh grass for their animals and small scale hunters who search for wild animals. The District is also affected by soil erosion intensified by poor farming practices along the mountain slopes, mainly in four divisions namely Matombo, Mkuyuni, Mvuha, and Bwakira Chini divisions. Soil erosion is also caused by an illegal influx of cattle from other regions including Arusha, Shinyanga and Mbeya to Kitulanghalo and Mkulazi forest reserves and in general land of Mikese, Ngerengere, Bwakira Chini and Mvuha divisions leaving the land areas bare and badly destroyed, making them vulnerable to soil erosion. Illegal small holder mining activities along River Ruvu also poses eminent threat to environmental health in this District.

Apart from land and forest areas, the District's water bodies are also endangered by human actions. One of the environmental concern in water bodies in this District is pollution from waste disposal. It was noted that some of the streams which join major rivers like Ngerengere, Mgeta and Ruvu rivers start or pass through concentrated trading centre such as Mvuha, Mkuyuni and Mngazi wards giving people the chance to use them as disposing bodies for liquid and sold waste products resulting from trade activities. Moreover, due to poor waste disposal management, people living near the rivers use them for dumping solid and liquid wastes from toilets and chemical wastes from industries. In addition, transportation of oil spills and chemical substances from garages and industries located in the areas, to the nearby water bodies poses threats to atmospheric environment and affect realisation of climate action targets. The problem of illegal waste disposal in water bodies is largely contributed by lack of/inadequate waste disposal infrastructures in most of the trading centers found in this District.

The District also faces eminent danger of agrochemical pollution fueled by poor use of industrial fertilizers and pesticides. The area is popular for vegetable and fruits farming which mostly involves use of industrial fertilizers and pesticides. Chemical residues from vegetable and fruits gardens and farms in upland areas are normally transported down into the rivers affecting water quality in these bodies. Moreover, seasonal flooding of rivers, poor agricultural practices in pad fields in low land areas and poor irrigation practices have intensified the salinization and alkalinisation problem in rivers. Climate action initiatives are crucial not only for survival of humans but also other species such as fish and domestic and wild animals. As a result of massive degradation of forests due to human activities such as agriculture, settlements, intensive animal farming, logging activities, movement of wildlife from one protected area to another has been badly affected in Morogoro District. Poaching for wild animal meat and ivory is rampant in Selous Game Reserve and JUKUM WMA.

Most of the protected areas in Morogoro District where wildlife are found, like Mkulazi Forest Reserve and Gonabis protected area are highly encroached by livestock, discouraging wildlife habitation and reproduction. Generally, report from environmental and natural resources departments in Morogoro District Council show that, the area is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts due to anthropogenic activities.

3.2 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Purposive sampling was used to select the case study area, Morogoro District, and key informants. The district was chosen due to its experience with climate change disasters and actions. Twelve (12) Key informants from Mvuha and Serembala wards in this District were also selected purposively. These included eight (8) elders from farming and pastoral communities (two (2) elders from farming and two (2) from pastoralist communities in each ward) and four (4) officials (two from the Environmental Department and two from the Natural Resources Department) at Morogoro District Council. Convenience sampling was used to select 178 respondents, 39 from farmers and 39 pastoral community who completed the questionnaire. With the help of District Environmental Officers and local research assistants, some households were visited and asked to complete questionnaires if they were willing. Some farmers were visited on their farms, and pastoralists were found while seeking pasture. Anyone who was willing and appeared to understand the study's issues was selected to fill the questionnaire.

3.3 Methods of Data Collection

Focus group discussions were conducted with villagers at Mvuha and Serembala Wards in the district. Interviews were conducted with elders from farming and pastoral communities, as well as with officials from the Morogoro District Council (MDC). Interviews with officials provided preliminary information, aiding the organization of subsequent interviews with elders and focus group discussions. Two focus group discussions were held, one in Mvuha and another one in Serembala Ward. Each discussion included eight members (four males and four females), resulting in a total of 16 informants from among farmers and pastoralists who participated in focus group discussions. Data were also collected through observation of areas in the district affected by floods and storms associated with El Niño rains from March to April 2024. Official documents from MDC were also reviewed, including: the Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2021/2022-2025/2026, the undated MDC Social and Economic Profile, and the Report on the Effects of El Niño Rains of April 2024. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze data. Data analysis was conducted concomitantly with data collection activities to allow for self and participant reflexivity. The raw data were audio-recorded and transcribed to facilitate the arrangement of categories and themes. Themes derived from the data (climate narratives) were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique (Dawadi, 2020).

4.0 THE RESULTS

4.1 Farmers' Climate Change Narratives

The Waluguru is one of big and famous peasants' tribes in Morogoro District. During interviews, the elders from the Waluguru Tribe provided the story of *Boka* to explain the causes of climate change disasters particularly floods and storms that hit the area. The Waluguru peasants describe *Boka* as a very large and long snake with seven heads, living in Uluguru Mountains. This snake tends to shift from the mountains to the

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Indian Ocean through River Ruvu. The shift of this snake normally takes place at midnight and is accompanied by heavy rainfalls, land slides and even storms, carrying with it heavy logs and soil and plants debris causing massive destruction of properties and even deaths to animals and people living in the areas where it passes. The elders said that people living near the rivers normally hear some applause and sounds of people singing joyfully from the rivers and see glittering body of Boka moving towards the lower course from Uluguru Mountains. Most of informers insisted that incidences of heavy rains, floods and storms will not happen again in the near future because, Boka does not move frequently but takes some years to do so. In addition to Boka's movement, most elders believe that the natural disasters have been caused by wrong doings among people especially young generation who have committed unimaginable sins such as homosexuality and drug abuse. The narratives about a large snake were also supported by immigrant tribes especially the Sukuma, who also insisted the power of such creatures in causing disasters or bringing lucky to the people.

The elderly and young people alike, who participated in the focus group discussions from farmers' households insisted the importance of spiritual interventions to avert climate change disasters. "In those days our ancestors used to cry to their Gods, and offered them sacrifices in sacred places to appease and make them release blessings", said one of the elders who engage in traditional medicines. This elder said that in Morogoro District, the most sacred place where people used to pray to their ancestors is called Kolelo. In this place there was a female deity called *Bibi*, (grandmother). Bibi, sometimes referred to as Kolelo is believed to be given the divine powers by God so as to heal people and help the communities to solve various challenges including weather and climate calamities. "Bibi desliked wrong doers so she did not allow them to visit the place. She also prohibited cutting of trees or collecting any thing from the surrounding forests without permission from spiritual ancestors (*mizimu*) as this would anger them and punish the people", the elder remarked during interviews. The villagers said that the introduction of Islam and Christianity has reduced practice of rituals to appease Kolelo Goddes. Some villagers feel that neglect of Kolelo has contributed to the sufferings that they get including the recent calamities from elinino rains. Their belief is that Kolelo would give instructions to people that would help to avoid the angers of Boka. Some elders hold religious beliefs (mostly Islam) and are of the view that sins have angered God (Allah). Natural disasters are an outcome of sins.

Some villagers, especially the elites had different views about climate change disasters. For them disasters such as floods and drought which attack their communities emanate from human destruction of the environment. At Mvuha Ward, the informers recalled the time when there was no interference by people from other communities outside MDC and Morogoro region generally, such as Maasai pastoralists and Sukuma mixed farmers. They said that their major River, the River Mvuha, was perennial, in those days with health flows all year long. Nowadays some parts of this River dry out or remain with very little water. The people feel that extension of agricultural activities at the upper course especially after the arrival of Sukumas and encroachment of the river banks by the Sukuma, Mang'ati and Maasai pastoralists who want to water their cattle has contributed greatly to destruction of the River leading to flooding disasters each year as one of the residents at Serembala Ward complained:

> *"We did not have this scenario before. Since we started to witness the influx of cattle, everything has changed. Pastoralists do not care what happens to the environment. All they want is their cattle to get water and pasture. Apart from pastoralists, there are large scale farmers, who clear the land massively for cultivation. By nature, we are subsistence farmers who are not capable of large scale bush or forest clearance. But the new comers from different regions clear bushes in large scale by the help of farming technologies, which most of us, the indigenous peasants do not have".*

Another informant from Mvuha Ward chipped in during this conversation by saying:

> *"The floods in various villages at Mvuha Ward happen due to sand deposition in the river. This occurs due to soils erosion along the River, contributed mainly by cattle encroachment. I don't believe that we the farmers who own small vegetable gardens along the riverine and engage in small scale farming have something to do with what is happening. Our gardens have been there for years without any problem. Even our farming system has never been a threat to our environment''.*

4.2 Pastoralists' Climate Change Narratives

The informants from Maasai Pastoralists also insisted the importance of spiritual life, cultural beliefs and traditional approaches in averting the weather and climate change disasters. The biggest problems confronting pastoral communities are drought and human and cattle diseases. Like the farmers the pastoralists also emphasise the role of traditional worship and cultural values in averting calamities. For them, the problem is not only unsustainable use of resources but also neglect of Maasai traditions and worship to their God or *Eng'ai*. As pointed out by one of the Maasai elders, Maasai pastoralists depended on two major traditional survival strategies during dry seasons: mobility and drinking of animal blood in addition to payers to *Eng'ai*. In modern times, drinking of animal blood and praying to *Eng'ai* are prohibited especially among the families which have been converted to Christianity. This has reduced the capapcity of Maasai people to endure hardships brought by drought. During interviews the elderly Maasai men and women at Seremabala Ward admitted that drinking of animal blood is against Christianity and therefore a diminishing tradition among Maasai people. Apart from that, the Maasai elders also complained about erosion of Maasai traditional values especially among the young generation, which they see as one of the contributing factors for the recurrent climatic calamities. In relation to Maasai traditional worship, one of old Maasai women had this to say:

> *When we were young, our elders used to go to Oloibon, to seek help in case of any calamity or problem that afflicted people. Oloibon is a Maasai old man gifted with spiritual powers and used as a mediator between God (Eng'ai) and the people. After communication with Eng'ai, Oloibon would lead people into prayers and issue some directives on what to do to avert the situation. Women had a special duty of praying to God to plead his mercy due to their committed spirituality. We witnessed prompt responses after prayers through Oloibon. In these days, people pray in churches, they seldom go to Oloibon. Their faith is also shaken, so getting results takes long and sometimes never happens. What helped us to get immediate results is our strong faith on Eng'ai and divine powers of Oloibon.*

Generally, this study, through the interviews with Maasai elders at Seremabala and Mvuha Wards in Morogoro District revealed that the ritual practiced in old Maasai communities played great role in regulation of access and use of natural resources. Strong faith in the powers of *Eng'ai*

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and *Oloibon* created fear among the peole. The fear of *Eng'ai* and spiritual elder *Oloibon* compelled the Maasai peole to obey orders including the orders related to harvesting and using natural resources. Some Christian Maasais, believe that God is angry due to sins people commit. They insisted turning back to God. Like the traditionalists they believe that erosion of faith has contributed to immoral behaviours which have largely contributed to imprudent use of resources.

In addition to rituals, the informants pointed to the effects of land tenure systems on Maasai ways of life. The informants said that traditional Maasai communities used to access pasture land through open access. This system assured them of the availability of pasture for their cattle in nearby areas. Nowadays land is owned through property rights. This has made Maasai pastoralists walk long distances in search of open pasture for their cattle. This study found that the act of moving long distance with cattle has intensified environmental degradation and fuelled conflicts with other resources users, mostly farmers. The problem, according to the Maasai informers at Mvuha and Serembala Wards is compounded by the tendency by the farmers to cultivate crops along or near water sources, making it difficult for the cattle to move and reach water without causing destruction to crops. Generally, the study noted that modern Maasai communities face stiff competition over land, water and other livelihood resources which always force them to live in hostility with other resources users especially the farmers.

4.3 Experts' Climate Change Narratives

According to experts view the challenges pinpointed by Maasai elders have no connection with climate change. In most cases the experts insist the need for pastoralits to reduce number of cattle and abandon nomadic livestock keeping. During interviews, the informants from Maasai community, showed mixed feelings about this call from experts. Most of them still feel that owning large group of cattle is a symbol of wealth and respect. Thus, they don't buy the idea of reducing their cattle and go for indoor livestock keeping. Indoor cattle grazing is also expensive and require rigorous investments. Unfortunately, most Maasai pastoralists are still not ready to spend money on such modern techniques. The researchers noted that, most of pastoralists showed concern about environmental destruction from their livestock keeping methods, however, most of them feel that it is not their fault. They keep livestock traditionally because the government has not empowered them. Generally, the study noted that pastoralists have common understanding with the experts about climate change challenges, however, they don't agree that livestock keeping is the major contributing factor.

The expert views also pointed to the tendency by the farmers to cultivate near water sources and along the slopes of mountains without taking any precautions. In addition, they complained that farmers open new farms everyday, sometimes in areas designated for conservation. This slow down the conservation efforts in the area. Like the pastoralists, the farmers do not believe that their farming activities cause harm to the environmnet. Most of them pointed during the FGDs and face to face interviews that expansion of agricultural activities up to the conserved areas is a fault of Morogoro District Council. The Council is blamed for the failure to control influx of cattle and restrict commercial farming and mining activities recently expanding in the area. Competitive narratives were also noted between the the young people from the indigenous peasant tribe of Luguru, and MDC experts in one hand and the Luguru elders on the other. While the young people and experts from MDC insist that human activities such as overgrazing is the main cause of climate change disasters, the elders insisted that spiritual forces of Kolero greatly contribute to such disasters. Surprisingly, the study noted that the Maasai elders and the young boys called Moran, did not show any differences in their undertaking about climate change disasters. Both of them insisted the spiritual power of Eng'ai and Oloibon, although they also pointed to the governance weaknesses of MDC in controlling livestock influx and farming activities.

4.4 Support for Collaborative Climate Action Between Farmers and Pastoralists

This study examined whether respondents supported collaborative approaches to climate action as a reconciliation strategy, given the documented cultural and epistemological differences between farming and pastoral communities. The findings reveal significant potential for reconciliation**,** where 80% of the respondents said yes to collaborative approaches as indicated in Table 4.1.1

Table 4.1 Views regarding the proposal to unite farmers and pastoralitsts

Do you Agree with the Suggested Proposal of Uniting Farmers and Pastoralists in Climatic change Activities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	144	80.9	92.3	92.3
	No	12	6.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	156	87.6	100.0	
Missing	System	22	12.4		
Total		178	100.0		

Source: *Field Data, 2025*

The results demonstrate overwhelming support for collaborative climate action, with 144 respondents (80.9% of total sample, 92.3% of valid responses) expressing willingness to participate in programes for uniting farmers and pastoralists in climate activities. Only 12 respondents (6.7%) opposed such collaboration. The high response rate (87.6% valid responses) indicates strong engagement with this reconciliation concept. This finding challenges the assumption that perceptual differences between farmers and pastoralists are irreconcilable due to cultural differences. Despite identified narrative tensions regarding climate change causation and appropriate responses, both groups demonstrate pragmatic recognition that environmental challenges transcend cultural boundaries and require collaborative solutions.

Because it was revealed that uniting the two groups is a crucial milestone for promotion of collective action in climate change, the study also wanted to identify the mechanisms that participants think are suitable for uniting the two groups (farmers and pastoralists). Respondents identified specific mechanisms they considered most suitable for promoting farmer-pastoralist collaboration in climate action as shown in Table 4.2.

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Table 4.2: Preferred Mechanisms for Farmer-Pastoral Collaboration

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Organizing cultural and sports festivals.	44	24.7	34.6	34.6
	Establishing environmental groups with a mix of farmers and livestock keepers.	58	32.6	45.7	80.3
	Creating conflict resolution Committees with mixed members.	8	4.5	6.3	86.6
	Launching development projects through groups that include both farmers and livestock keepers.	17	9.6	13.4	100.0
	Total	127	71.3	100.0	
Missing	System	51	28.7		
Total		178	100.0		

Source: Field Data 2025

4.3 Discussion

The study has revealed how the three key actors namely LGA officials, farmers and pastoralists have different and competing narratives on climate change and natural disasters. Outsiders of the farmers and pastoral communities normally believe that the two groups cannot be reconciled due to ethnic and cultural differences. The strongest preference for establishing environmental groups with mixed farmer-pastoralist membership reflects recognition that environmental challenges require practical, collaborative management approaches. This mechanism directly addresses the core issue of competing narratives about environmental degradation causes, by creating structured platforms for knowledge exchange, discussion of issues and joint problem-solving. Support for cultural and sports festivals indicates understanding that social capital building must accompany technical environmental interventions (Dawadi, 2020). This preference is particularly significant given the documented cultural inflexibility of Maasai pastoral communities and historical inter-ethnic tensions between them and other groups. There is relatively lower support for joint development projects and formal conflict resolution committees**.** This suggests that communities prefer relationship-building approaches over more structured institutional arrangements. The hesitancy toward joint development projects likely reflects concerns about financial risk and trust-building requirements (Amri, 2023).

The fact that the group members in both sides acknowledged the importance of collaboration in climate action reveals possibilities of reconciling competing narratives between them. Three major lessons emanate from the study: First, Pragmatic Problem Recognition; both farming and pastoral communities acknowledge that environmental degradation affects their livelihoods regardless of narrative differences about causation. This shared vulnerability creates common ground for collaboration. Second, Cultural Bridge-Building Readiness; the support for cultural festivals represents a significant shift, particularly among Maasai communities traditionally characterized by limited inter-ethnic interaction. This openness suggests reduced cultural rigidity when faced with climate challenges. Third, Preference for Organic Relationship Building; the prioritization of environmental groups and cultural activities over formal conflict resolution indicates preference for natural relationship development rather than imposed institutional frameworks.

While considering reconciliation of the competing narratives, it is crucial to bear in mind the complexity of the matter. This conquer with the study from McGuire and Lynch (2017) it is illusion to think that all people can be supportive of the proposal. What need to be established first is the environment in which different groups trust each other, are empathetic and willing to move beyond entrenched positions and build a shared understanding about the contested issues. Co-evolution of meanings is crucial for common understanding and trust building. It is important to appreciate the fact that not all circumstances allow for common understanding on environmental issues. In some cases, reconciliation involves finding ways to exist alongside conflicting stories by appreciating their respective truths or limitations. What need to be insisted is the role all members have in safeguarding nature despite differences in their perspectives.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The systematic identification and analysis of reconciliation strategies for competing climate action narratives in Morogoro District demonstrates that despite fundamental differences between indigenous knowledge systems versus scientific approaches there exists substantial community willingness (80%) to pursue collaborative climate action. The evidence reveals that mixed environmental groups represent the most viable reconciliation mechanism, supported by good number of respondents. This finding reflects recognition that environmental challenges transcend cultural boundaries and require collaborative solutions. The secondary preference for cultural integration through festivals and sports indicates understanding that social capital building must accompany technical interventions.

Key insights from this study for climate action narrative reconciliation are: Feasibility; Reconciliation is possible when appropriate institutional frameworks are established. Preference hierarchy; Communities prefer practical environmental collaboration over formal conflict resolution

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processes. Cultural sensitivity; Successful reconciliation requires respecting diverse knowledge systems rather than privileging one over others. Gradual approach; Trust-building through low-stakes activities should precede more complex collaborative arrangements

The mechanisms identified through this research paper provide actionable pathways for climate governance improvement in ethnically diverse contexts. Implementation success will depend on sustained commitment from all stakeholders and recognition that narrative reconciliation is an ongoing process rather than a one-time intervention. This study contributes both to practical climate governance in Morogoro District and to broader theoretical understanding of how competing environmental narratives can be reconciled in multi-ethnic African communities facing climate challenges.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study noted that most people are not well educated about climate change. To improve climate change literacy among the populace, MDC needs to invest seriously in community education programs to create awareness and sensitize more people on climate change issues. In all empowerment processes, it is crucial to appreciate the role of indigenous knowledge systems. These systems can be used to communicate climate change lessons to the people through the most respected community members.

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