

**STAKEHOLDERS' RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN
THE OIL EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY: A CASE OF TURKANA COUNTY,
KENYA**

BY

WABOMBA SIMIYU TOBIAS

C50/31624/2015

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF LAW, ARTS AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY
(POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY) OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

JUNE, 2023

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or any other award.

Signature: .....

Date: 02/06/2023.....

Wabomba Simiyu Tobias - C50/31264/2015

Department of Sociology, Gender and Development Studies

SUPERVISORS

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the student under our supervision.

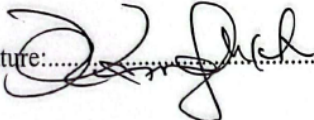
Signature: .....

Date: 2/6/2023.....

Dr. Francis P. Kerre

Department of Sociology, Gender and Development Studies

Kenyatta University

Signature: ..... Date: 5-6-23.....

Prof. Kennedy Agade Mkutu

Department of International Relations

United States International University – Africa

ABSTRACT

Discovery and exploitation of natural resources in natural resources-rich countries around the world has resulted in mixed outcomes. Countries that apply good governance principles in extractive industry, transparency and accountability, prior informed consent, and adequate involvement of stakeholders have attained positive results – socio-economic development as seen in Scandinavian countries. However, countries that have ignored these practices or insufficiently applied them have experienced negative outcomes of natural resources commonly known as resource curse such as conflicts, environmental degradations, displacement and dispossession, and unresolved grievances among others as seen in developing countries in Africa. These countries are also characterized by weak institutions, poverty, fewer jobs, inequality, and destruction of the social fabric of the local communities. These aspects have been the drivers of violent conflicts resulting from tension among stakeholders. Oil was discovered in Turkana County in 2012. It brought a lot of excitement and hope for the improvement of livelihoods to Kenyans as a result of employment and expected revenue. To date, oil exploration and extraction has generated a lot of benefits to the Turkana region such as construction of roads, schools, hospitals, permanent residences, and jobs among others. However, there is little information documenting how civilians in Turkana County are deliberately targeted, displaced to open up access and settlement to “high value” land (for development activities like oil production, renewable energy, and agribusiness projects; prime grazing, water courses, and agricultural land). Therefore, this study sought to 1) identify stakeholders and their interaction in the oil extractive industry; 2) the nature of their relationships; 3) areas of contestation and potential conflict in Turkana County; and 5) suggest ways of preventing or managing these real and potential conflicts. The study used a political ecology approach as the theoretical framework since it has three power perspectives that explain economic structures in society, the role of actors advancing dispossession and accumulation, and resulting acts of violence, contestation, and resistance. The study adopted a case study approach in data collection. In-depth interviews, FGDs and KIIs were used to collect data on stakeholders in the oil extractive industry in South Lokichar Basin because it is the epicenter of oil extraction. Qualitative data was transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify themes, patterns, and trends using Max QDA. The findings of the study that TOC, national and county governments, and local community were major stakeholders in the oil industry. It further revealed that land, water, business tenders, jobs, benefits, environmental hazards, compensation, and security are the leading areas of contestation in Turkana County in an industry that has opened up a field of interaction between the investor, the government (both national and county), local communities, business community, civil society, security agents, sub-contractors, and different segments of the community. The study concludes that unequal power relations in the stakeholders’ relationships has resulted to environmental degradation, insecurity of the local communities, inaccessibility to jobs in the extractive industry and tenders by the locals, economic exclusions, and the loss of grazing and ancestral lands leading to violent conflicts. It recommends that TOC and national government bring on board all stakeholders and obtain their consent, involvement, and commitment in the industry. Similarly, the Community Land Act (2016) should be accelerated and implemented to allow local communities to legally register and own land and increase their bargaining influence and power position in the oil extractive industry in Turkana County.