Traditional Conflict Prevention and Peace Building: *Dzoro* System in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Despite its long history of existence among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, the dzoro system has largely remained undocumented in terms of its developmental and conflict prevention potential. In this article, it is clear that the *dzoro* system prevents conflicts and promote peace. It does so through promoting constant interaction among members of the community, enforcing the value of togetherness, facilitating food security and providing an efficient division of labour. This article acknowledges the fact that the *dzoro* system performs a cocktail of functions among the Shona people and that there is no specific function to which it has been designed. With such a multiplicity of functions, it is noted that the system is organized along the Ubuntu philosophy which is critical in the preservation of peace and the prevention of conflicts. The article is based on qualitative methods: unstructured interviews, focus group discussions and direct observations.

Keywords: Conflict Prevention, Violence, Peace building, Ubuntu

Introduction

This article examines how the *dzoro* practice has functioned in practice to manage peace and sustains it overtime in post-conflict Zimbabwe. With the view of "African solutions to African problems", this article provides an appreciation of the dzoro system in the peace building processes in the communities in which it exists. Being heavily grounded in the Ubuntu philosophy, the dzoro system complements other traditional peace building mechanisms to prevent conflicts or at least to manage them so that they do not degenerate into dysfunctionality. The article examines the quest for peace and sustainable development at various levels of society. It actually builds upon the recognition that the art of peace building and conflict prevention requires context specific solutions and mechanisms. This is not to say that the modern (sometimes referred to as the Euro-centric approaches) are null and void, but that they have to be blended with the traditional ones in order to build sound peace building structures.

Conceptualising *Dzoro* system

Dzoro (singular form) or Madzoro (plural form), are Shona terms meaning taking turns to herd cattle. They also literally mean rotations and as such they imply that households engage in rotations in herding cattle (see Changa and Mamvura forthcoming). In this article the singular form is widely used although reference to the plural form (madzoro) is made. The rotations here being referred to as the Dzoro are initiated and organized by community members. The person on duty is referred to as 'Mudzoro' ('Vadzoro' plural) (see Changa and Mamvura forthcoming). This title is not permanent as it is only assumed when one is on duty only. In Zimuto the size of the dzoro vary depending on the number of cattle in the area. Members of this particular community distinguish between dzoro duku (*small dzoro*) and dzoro guru (big dzoro). The small one is made up of very few households usually not exceeding five. This is done at the start of the planting season (October to mid-November depending on the amount of rainfall received). The logic of forming a small dzoro is that usually

during that time the pastures will be poor with very small grass as a result there should be a small herd so that they are fed well.

The big dzoro is organized when the pastures are now evergreen, with sufficient grass to feed large herds of cattle. These usually comprise of ten households or more but usually they do not exceed fifteen households depending on the number of cattle each household has. There are two types of madzoro, that is Dzoro rembudzi (for herding goats) and dzoro remombe for herding cattle. In this article focus is on both types and their contribution towards conflict prevention. The observation made in this study is that the dzoro system is a collective community driven practice designed to lessen the burden of herding cattle.

Conflict Prevention

Conflict is not a new phenomenon in Africa. It dates back to the pre-colonial era although changed shape and form with the advent of colonialism and Christianity. In relation to this, Musingafi, Mafumbate and Khumalo (2019) made the submission that conflict is an inevitable and necessary aspect of human societies. At one point or another all healthy social system are bound to experience conflicts although these may vary according to magnitude, forms and impacts. The African continent has not been immune to conflicts that range from political, economic, religious and ethnic conflicts. The prevalence of such conflicts should not be taken to understand the continent as inhabited by barbaric and primitive people as argued by some misguided Eurocentric scholars. Instead this should be interpreted as a harbinger of the existence of different interests that are also found in other parts of the world and that are natural and normal. It must be stated that every conflict situation has its own solutions that are embedded in the context in which it is taking place. Following this argument, this article acknowledges the fact that Africa possesses a huge package of conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms that are housed within its social, cultural and moral fabric. Thus for Mbwirire and Kurwa (2018) traditional values, beliefs and customs of the African continent constitute a vital cog in the peaceful existence of communities. These values and mechanisms have been in existence since the pre-colonial times although the wave of globalization and modernity has to some extent diluted them (Ajai and Buhari 2014). In concurrence with this, Ajai and Buhari (2014) juxtapose that Africans have their own ways of understanding conflicts and such an understanding is crucial in their approach to conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Although western ways of preventing conflicts have been glorified over the past decades with western institutions and ideas dominating, there is growing recognition among peace practitioners that traditional methods of conflict prevention and resolution can go a long way in promoting durable peace on the continent. This view resonates with the observation made by Ofulo (1999) that traditional approaches to conflict are in great demand in the contemporary world, particularly in Africa. This realization has prompted scholars to unravel the conflict prevention potential of traditional methods such as Kuripa ngozi (Chivasa 2019), traditional marriage (Dodo 2015), nhimbe (Sithole 2020) and the dare system (Musingafi et al 2019). This study also contributes to the already existing literature on traditional conflict prevention mechanisms by looking at the dzoro system, a communal system of herding cattle which has been in existence for several decades in Zimbabwe but which largely remains undocumented despite its boundless potential to prevent conflicts.

As noted by Mawere and Awuah-Nyamekye (2015), communities in African societies are reverting to their indigenous ways of knowing to solve some existential challenges such as recurrent droughts and environmental degradation (Tatira 2014). In terms of the prevention of conflict, the resurgence of traditional systems has been accentuated by the success of the Gacaca courts in Rwanda which proved beyond doubt that Africa can and should utilize indigenous knowledge and institutions to ensure peace (Musingafi, Mafumbate and Khumalo 2019). In Kenya, the Harambee system

represents a traditional approach to conflict as is the case with Ujamaa of Tanzania and the Gadaa system which was used to prevent conflicts over water resources in Ethiopia (Getui 2009). Failure to utilize these context-based mechanisms in addressing conflict result in huge amounts of money and precious resources as well as professional and technical efforts being exhausted without yielding any positive outcomes (Mbwirire and Kurwa 2018). This is because the western ideologies seriously lack cultural significance in African societies.

Whilst some of the traditional mechanisms perform a multiplicity of functions, it should be noted that those functions are aimed to maintain societal equilibrium and hence maintain peace. To exemplify, Sithole (2020) observed that since the 1800 people in most Zimbabwean communities were primarily pre-occupied with the economic and social outcomes of the nhimbe practice, thus leaving a gap in terms of its conflict prevention potential. It is now well documented that apart from being a community socio-economic assistance practice, nhimbe also has social reservoirs of conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the communities in which it is practiced (Sithole 2020). This is because people eat together at the work party and there is strong interaction among community members and thus building strong social and moral bonds among them. Mbwirire (2017) juxtaposed that nhimbe have a triple effect of socio-economic assistance, social cohesion and conflict prevention. In this article there is an acknowledgement of the fact that the dzoro practice is similar in most respects to nhimbe practice and the two a complementary forces.

Although nhimbe covers a lot of agricultural activities including land preparation, threshing or shelling of grain, sowing of seeds, ox-drawn ploughing, planting, weeding, harvesting, thatching of houses among others (Sithole 2014), it does not extend to cattle herding, which is the primary focus of this study. Social interaction which Sithole (2020) pointed to as one of the principal elements in conflict prevention is more pronounced and frequent in the dzoro system than in the nhimbe practice. This is because the dzoro is a daily practice which allows communities to meet during the morning and in the evening. Such repetitive interaction is a super glue that cements social relationships. The fact that cattle graze together on the same pastures symbolizes a community working together and pooling resources together for the good of the society. In the morning cattle belong to individual households in their own private kraals but they are handed over to the 'Mudzoro' (the one on duty) they now belong to the same kraal. Scholarship on dzoro (Changa and Mamvura forthcoming) recognized the system as some king of division of labour which allows the community in question to do their agricultural activities and other non-farm activities in an efficient way. This has left the conflict prevention potential of dzoro at the periphery of research.

The traditional focus on conflict has also pointed to marriage as having the potential to prevent conflicts. The orthodox conceptualization of the marriage institution has generally focused on the functions of marriage such as reproduction, sustenance of the family name and primary socialization. However, Dodo (2014) juxtaposes that marriage among the Shona is also a conflict prevention mechanism. He reasons that the community dimension of marriage brings together two strange families. In some cases, previously hostile families are brought together through marriage so much so that there will be great friendship and cooperation. Marriage being the bedrock of society thus provides room for societal members to work together and strengthen moral relationships. In the end conflict is prevented. The dzoro system complements the marriage institution by combining a variety of marriages and families together. In fact dzoro constitutes a family because those who belong to the same dzoro develop strong ties. The observation by Dodo (2014) resonates with what transpires in Swaziland where the king marries from all groupings of people in the country in what is known as tribal intermarriages. Contrary to the general sentiments that such a system reflects the king's lustful behavior, Musingafi, Mafumbate and Khumalo (2019) argue that the system is

designed to prevent tribal hatred and conflicts as the king's marriage provides some checks and balances to the society.

Another interesting dimension of traditional conflict prevention mechanisms is the focus on the spiritual aspect of conflict (Jeranyama and Mpofu-Hamadziripi 2022). This reflects misunderstanding or discord between the living and the dead which can be settled by traditional rituals such as nyaradzo, kuripa ngozi, kupeta mufi, kogova nhumbi among other rituals practiced by the Manyika people of Zimbabwe. Although Jeranyama and Mpofu-Hamadziripi (2022) provided very useful insights on this spiritual dimension of conflict, the dzoro system has not been part of their focus as another mechanism which can be used effectively to address the relationship between the living and the dead. Like the Manyika, the Shona people in Masvingo north also believe that conflict is better averted than resolved and as a result they inherit the dzoro system as part of an appeasing ritual to ensure harmony within their communities. This study also built upon the foundation of the spirituality of conflict to unravel the potential of dzoro in preventing the emergence of an acrimonious relationship between the living and the dead among communities in Zimuto. Such forms of conflicts cannot be prevented by the western jurisprudential philosophies and institutions that have worked and continue to work in Africa (Kariuki 2015). As such an exploration of the potential dzoro in preventing such conflict is necessary.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative methodology to capture the conflict prevention potential of the Dzoro system in Zimuto area. The methodology was chosen primarily because of its ability to explore issues in an in-depth manner (Chalhoub-Deville and Deville 2008), hence suitable for an explorative study of this nature. Further, the methodology is very flexible and thus suitable to understand the subjective realities of social life from the view points of the research participants (Maxwell 2012). Qualitative methodology was therefore appropriate for capturing the participants' interpretations, experiences and understanding of the Dzoro system without necessarily imposing the researcher's external logic on the topic (as would be the case if quantitative methodology was used). The sample for the study was selected using the purposive sampling method. This sampling technique enabled the researcher to select information rich cases and since the researcher was a temporary resident of the area it was easy for him to identify the information rich cases. In the end ward 2 area of Zimuto was purposively selected and six villages from the ward were also selected using the same technique. This was primarily due to the accessibility of the area to the researcher. Village heads and other general participants were also selected using the same technique. For the purposes of interviewing and observations the researcher purposively selected some events and places that are closely related to the herding of cattle. This include dip tanks, grazing pastures and the meeting points where cattle are surrendered to the one who has the duty.

Unstructured interviews were used to solicit data from the participants. These enabled the researcher to gather in depth information and also provided room for probing for more information. These interviews were done with village heads and elderly members of the community who are the custodians of the customs and traditions of the area. These provided the background and benefits of the dzoro system captured in this study. Interviews were also done with cattle herders   at the grazing pastures. These interviews were aided by direct observations by the researchers. The researcher observed the dzoro system by following the cattle herders to the pasture lands although not necessarily spending the whole day with them. This helped to get a nuanced picture of the system and thus increased the validity of the data collected. Focus Group Discussions were also carried out at the meeting points and this were meant to enrich data collected from one-on-one interviews.

Since the dzoro system is a collective practice it was necessary to understand its relevance from a group perspective and hence the reason for focus group discussions.

Dzoro Rules and the Prevention of Conflicts

The dzoro system is made up of rules and regulations that govern how members operate. Most participants indicated that the rules just like any other societal rule must be adhered to religiously. It is such commitment to rules that helps to prevent conflicts among the members and consequently on the broad society. The rules can be classified into different categories. The first category of rules deal with time issues. In all the dzoro groups studied the time for handing cattle over to the one on duty is 9:00am. As a result, everyone must be at the meeting point on time. The rule is quite clear as enunciated by one participant during an interview:

> One has to bring their cattle at exactly 9:00. If one comes late they will either herd their cattle on that particular day or they have to follow the one on duty to the pastures. In the evening every member must be at the collection point at exactly 5:00pm. If they fail to so the one on duty simply leaves the cattle there and if anything goes wrong after five, the owner is responsible.

The time rules helped to homogenise community activities and operations. They allow members to meet at once and share their thoughts together. Coming at the same time helps members to confirm that the one on duty (herein referred to as *Mudzoro*) has been given such and such a number of cattle and that the cattle were all well when they were handed over. This also helps to cement relationships as people constantly interact with each other during the same hours.

With regards to damage to crops done by cattle, there are clear rules stipulating what is supposed to be done. If cattle destroy crops in the fields, it is the mudzoro who is responsible for compensation required by the owner of the field even if his or her cattle per se have not damaged the crops. This is based on the principle that once cattle are handed over to the mudzoro, they all literally belong to him/her and as such whatever happens during the course of the duty will be accounted for by him/her. This rule is important in preventing seasonal conflicts that erupt from time to time during the cropping season in most communal areas of Zimbabwe. One participant reiterated that:

> The cropping season is associated with a lot of conflicts emanating from damage caused by crops in the fields. People scold each other, some can even injure the cattle if they devour their crops and in some instances people engage in fierce fights. One can also get bewitched if cattle destroy someone's crops. To curb such occurrences, there is a rule that whoever is on duty compensates whatever damage to crops done by cattle.

The rule helps to keep the mudzoro focused on the duty, it ensures diligence when herding cattle. Since the mudzoro is solely responsible for compensating any damage to crops, conflict is kept from spreading into the whole community. Instead of having every member of the dzoro compensating, it is only the mudzoro and the one whose crops have been destroyed who discuss together over the matter. Participants also indicated that if is reckless and always let cattle damage crops, they can be expelled from the dzoro. This expulsion however, occurs after several warnings and normally the owner of the cattle can be asked to change his/her mudzoro. To further curb the vice, it is a clear rule in all the dzoro studied that very young people, those who are very old and those with some mental health challenges must not be on duty. Only those who are mature and responsible can take the responsibility of the mudzoro. This prevents any excuses for any harm done to cattle or crops hence preventing conflicts.

The social sanctioning of behavior through fear is very common in traditional approaches to conflict prevention. The fact that one is afraid of misfortunes that can befall them such as illnesses, death and social isolation implies some invisible coercive force to comply with the demands of the community and hence maintaining peace. Chivasa (2019) noted that the fear of avenging spirit makes kuripa ngozi a conflict prevention mechanism among the Shona people. Similarly, the fear of compensating for the damage caused by cattle to the crops helps to sanction the behavior of each member on duty to avoid misunderstandings.

In addition, if a member of the dzoro has an injured cattle or one that is strange, they have to keep it at home and look after it for themselves. This also applies to sick animals and even those that have a habit of straying away from the rest of the herd. This helps to reduce unnecessary burden on the part of the mudzoro and simultaneously reducing contamination of other cattle (as in the case of sick animals). Further, the mudzoro is mandated to look for any cattle that gets lost in the course of their duty until they find it. This prevents loss of livestock to predators such as hyenas that infest the area. The mudzoro can be offered help if he/she is facing problems in trying to find the animal. Again the one on duty has to do it even when it is raining. All members have to always psyche themselves to carry out their duty even when there is a heavy downpour. This rule ensures consistence in the execution of duties. A participant interviewed said:

> No-one knows when rains come or when to experience heat waves. As such everyone must embrace themselves for duty despite the weather conditions of the day.

The rule helps to prevent members from shifting goal posts should they feel that the weather is bad and hence avoiding the disruption of sequence of duties. The existence of rules proves the fact that the dzoro system is highly organized. As can be noted the rules are just a replica of the African values and virtues that are grounded in the Ubuntu philosophy. This is supported by Ayindo and Jenner (2008) who opine that laws and conflict techniques in African societies are intertwined to the overall system of morality and ethics of African religion. These arguments debunk the myths by some misguided European scholars such as Hegel and Conrad who paint a picture of a 'dark continent' populated by sub-human dark beings who did not have a culture, language nor philosophy. This society is inherently characterised by disorder of the highest order and total absence of any form of organization.

Dzoro system and the prevention of conflicts over pasture land

The findings of this research reveal that the dzoro system plays a pivotal role in preventing conflicts over grazing land. In most rural communities in Zimbabwe conflicts over pasture land are rife owing to the depreciation in both the quantity and quality of grazing land. This is because most pasture land is being converted into arable land meant for crop production leaving very small portions for grazing purposes. I an interview Mr Choto (not real name) concurred that through the dzoro system conflicts over grazing land have always been prevented in Zimuto area for several decades and the occurrence of such type of conflict is rare. He had this to say:

> Herding cattle communally has helped greatly in preventing violence over grazing land since we use communal pasture land. The pastures are 'ours' they do not belong to a particular individual. Since I was born, I have never heard of people who have fought over grazing land. We hear such stories from other areas.

These remarks are a clear indication of the potential of the dzoro system to suppress conflicts at community level over grazing land. In some places where cattle is herd by single households the tendency is to privatize pasture land and naturally this generates a cut-throat competition over such land. These sentiments were also echoed by an elderly man who is part of the chief's council in the area. He opined that there are rare incidences of conflicts over grazing land and they hardly come to the chief's court. This is because the conflicts are easily handled by community members without the interference of the chief as the land belongs to the people and not an individual.

In all the focus group discussions conducted, members pointed out that the dzoro system in Zimuto promotes the idea of communal ownership of the pastures. This was evident in such phrases as 'mafuro edu/vufuro hwedu' translated 'our pasture land'. Thus communal ownership also brings in the notion of communal responsibility and accountability. This approach is grounded in the Ubuntu philosophy which emphasises the significance of communalism. Collectivism is central to the communalist approach to life. It emphasises togetherness, peace and harmony in societies. It becomes apparent that the dzoro system helps to prevent conflicts by reducing competition over grazing land and encouraging collective responsibility to take care of the land. This kind of approach to life is reflected in many proverbs in many parts of Africa. The Xhosa people of South Africa say: 'Ubuntu ungamntu ngabanye abantu' translated 'a person is a person through other people' and among the Shona people in Zimbabwe there is a saying that goes 'munhu munhu navanhu' translated ' a person is a person because of others' (David 2008). The high degree of interdependency being promoted by the dzoro system is crucial in the construction of personhood and the values of tolerance. All these virtues constitute the building blocks of peace in communities.

Everyday Interaction and the Prevention of Conflicts

The dzoro system promotes daily interaction of people at household, family and village levels. This is because members are drawn from different families and villages. All these people constitute a community and they meet on daily basis during the cropping season. In the morning members meet at nine o'clock at the designated meeting points to surrender their heads to the person on duty. In the evening the members once again meet in order to collect their cattle. This repetitive action is some kind of a ritual that promotes social cohesion. As observed by the researcher, members of the dzoro usually meet around 1645 hours waiting for their cattle. They sit in groups usually according to their age and sex and start discussing a whole lot of issues relating to social life. Some of the issues discussed include behaviour in the community, farming, weather and cattle diseases. This form of interaction acts as a glue that binds members of the community together (Changa and Mamvura forthcoming). As a result of this constant interaction among members of the community differences are likely to be diluted. Unlike other traditional conflict prevention mechanisms where members meet occasionally and sometimes depending on season, members of the dzoro meet on daily basis and hence creates greater opportunities for conflict prevention.

In one of the villages studied, the researcher observed that there is a football pitch at the meeting point. When waiting for the mudzoro to bring the cattle from the pastures, young boys play soccer there whilst the elderly watch. Most participants regarded this as a form of entertainment and a platform for young people to interact. This helps to cement the bonds between the young and the old. The elderly people who constitute the spectators help in controlling the behavior of the players by encouraging brotherly play. This helps to reduce stress among the community members and thus reducing the likelihood of conflict in the community. Again like nhimbe, the dzoro system provides a learning platform and acquisition of skills that are beneficial for societies.

Dare system through madzoro

The dzoro system is highly organized. This contradicts with the Eurocentric perspective of African practices and systems as primitive and backward. At the beginning of the cropping season, that is when people start to herd cattle, members of the dzoro hold a formal meeting where they discuss the rotations and how they are going to be done. They also remind each other about the rules of the dzoro and emphasize on the respect of rules. It is at this meeting that the challenges encountered during the previous season are discussed and workable solutions proffered. Since there is no leader of the dzoro there are no power dynamics involved although sometimes they appear in subtle forms. This design allows democratic discussion of the challenges without fear. This reduces gossiping which is a recipe for conflicts in all human relationships. Amai Tindo reiterated that:

> when we start our rotations, we meet at the usual place. At this meeting we discuss a lot of issues relating to the rules of the dzoro. These rules help to prevent conflict since every member will be made aware of what is to be done and what is not worth doing. We tell each other the truth since there is no hierarchy of authority in the dzoro. What we do not expect is grapevine after the meeting since this causes conflict.

The dare system as part of the Shona culture has long been a conflict prevention mechanism. Through this system, there is a smooth resolution of conflict. The dare provides a road map for the operations of any practice or ritual among the Shona people. It thus provides a framework for the Shona people's existential philosophy grounded in Ubuntu/vumunhu. In relation to these findings, Jreanyama and Mpofu-Hamadziripi (2022) assert that the dare system among the Shona people offers a platform that fosters a conducive environment and a neutral venue for problems to be solved. Dzoro system therefore works in cohorts with the dare system to prevent conflict. The dzoro system therefore fulfills the insatiable pre-requisite of human beings to rely upon each other in a plethora of life requirements (Rusbult and Van Lange 2008).

Sacredness of the dzoro and conflict prevention

The interviews conducted revealed that dzoro system is as old as the Zimuto community itself. No interviewee, even those that are over sixty years of age could not locate the time when the dzoro system started. Mr Ken (real name withheld) had this to say:

> dzoro system was even there when I was born. I will be lying to you if I claim to know when it started my son. Our forefathers even claimed that they just found the system there when they were born)

These sentiments reflect that dzoro system is an old system that has always been part of the Zimuto cultural landscape. As a result this points to its sacredness, it is over and above the individuals. Most participants argued that they have simply joined the dzoro group to which their forefathers belonged. As a result they are even afraid of breaking away from such groups with the view that this can invoke punishment from the ancestors. One old woman had this to say:

> we are still in the dzoro that our father belonged to when he was alive. If you get out of it, you would have despised the ancestors. If you do it even your herd will not be blessed by the ancestors.

The above findings find expression in Jeranyama and Mpofu-Hamadziripi (2022) who argued that conflict in the African context can take a spiritual dimension which goes beyond conservations and physical fighting but is characterized by disharmony with the spirit world. From these observations one can reiterate that the dzoro system is also crucial in preventing conflict between the living

and the dead in the Zimuto community. Thus maintaining harmonious relationships in the dzoro is also part of pleasing the ancestors who founded the dzoro institution. In maintaining these micro relationships, one will also be maintaining a good relationship with the dead and hence averting misfortunes. Broke-Utne (2007) also echoed the same sentiments as he argued that the fear of sorcery or divine punishment is also used to show what the breach of peace would bring upon the society and the conflicting parties. In the context of Zimuto there is fear expressed by participants to do away with the dzoro system and such fear is pivotal in maintaining good relations both among members of the community and between the living and the dead.

Most participants indicated that that it is a difficult decision to withdraw from the dzoro as this is synonymous to withdrawing from the community at large. This belief explains why over eighty-five percent of the households are part of a dzoro group. One of the participants opined that 'if one withdraws from the dzoro system they become isolated and in all community activities other members will not be willing to cooperate with them. This means they have to mourn their dead alone, withdraw from community gardens and also withdraw from the community burial associations'. This high sense of belongin to dzoro helps members to adhere to the dictates of dzoro. The feeling of isolation should not be taken for granted in the Shona community. Taylor (1963) asserts that an individual who is cut off from the community is nothing. This African philosophy acts as the lifeblood of community cohesion among societal members.

Dzoro Developmental Outcomes and Peace building

The dzoro system has several developmental outcomes that are crucial in the prevention of conflicts and the building of peace. In Zimuto most people eke out a living from subsistence farming which constitute over seventy-five percent of their livelihoods. The dzoro system contributes to the sustenance of livelihoods mainly through facilitating an efficient division of labour that increases productivity. In small groups (small dzoro), a household can herd cattle for only four days per month while in big groups a household can herd for only two days per month. This means that the rest of the time is devoted to work in the fields. One interviewee had this to say:

> the rotations that we make allow us to devote much of our time to farm activities. In my case only two days out of thirty or thirty-one are reserved for herding cattle. The other days I will be ploughing, planting, weeding in my fields, applying fertilizer, gathering humus from the hills or spraying pesticides. This also applies to many households in our community. The net benefit is increased yields and this lead to food security in the community.

It can be noted from the above sentiments that the dzoro system works hand-in-glove with other traditional systems such as humwe to promote food security. This food security prevents conflicts among community members. When there is shortage of food incidences of gender based violence are high and people fight over welfare provisions from the government. An efficient division of labour promoted by dzoro system therefore is crucial in peace building. This is supported by an English proverb which says 'a hungry man is an angry man'. Anger is associated with emotions and negative attitudes that can spark unquenchable conflicts in society.

From the above observations, one can argue that the dzoro system complements the humwe/hoka system in both developmental (Sithole 2020) and conflict prevention issues. Rather than being seen as discreet entities, the traditional developmental and peace building mechanisms must be seen as a web of interlocking initiatives that facilitate development at the same time ensuring peaceful coexistence among communities.

Conclusion

The paper managed to highlight the conflict prevention potential of the dzoro system in Zimuto community. The article reveals that the dzoro system is not divorced from other community-based traditional peace building mechanisms such as nhimbe and Kuripa ngozi. Instead these are complementary forces in ensuring a state of equilibrium in the community. The developmental outcomes of the dzoro system help in reducing competition among members and thus reduces the possibility of toxic attitudes. The system has also shown great resilience to the forces of globalization as it has remained intact despite the wave of individualism being promoted by western philosophies. It is argued in this paper that conflicts are inevitable feature of human societies but dzoro system plays a crucial role in preventing the escalation of such conflicts to dysfunctional levels.

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