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Exploration of the Strategies Used by Non-institutional actors to Foster Inclusion in the Implementation of County Roads Policy in Narok County, Kenya

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Abstract

The need to involve non-institutional actors in the implementation of roads policies is fundamental for good governance and effective service delivery. The county government is a local level layer of policy implementation in Kenya with a mandate to engage non-institutional actors in all policy issues. However, the implementation of local roads policies remains largely dominated by the formal county institutions in concert with national government at the expense of non-institutional actors. This phenomenon necessitated a study to unravel the strategies devised by the non-institutional actors that facilitate visibility in the implementation of County Roads Policy as per the County Spatial Development Plan and the County Roads, Walkways and Parking Bays Act (2018). The study established that the exclusion of key stakeholders such as the non-institutional actors has been a serious challenge in the implementation of policies especially the County Roads Policy. It was further established that the non-institutional actors push for inclusion mostly through collaborations with policy-makers, mobilizing public opinion and pressurizing the government. The study recommends the adoption of policies on increasing the inclusion of non-institutional actors in the implementation of County Roads Policy. Furthermore, the formation and sustenance of policy actor networks is required for sustainable development.

Key Words: County Roads Policy, Implementation, Inclusion, Non-institutional actors, Strategies, Sustainable development

Introduction

The dynamics of involving non-institutional actors in the implementation of local roads policies such as the County Roads Policy is a fundamental concern of modern governments since it enhances a nation's economic competitiveness and prosperity. The term strategy depicts the means and methods used by an actor to influence certain policy issues. Accordingly, the non-institutional actors - who are generally actors not associated to the government of the day, tend to employ different mechanisms/methods/means so as to wield their influence in social, economic and political matters affecting the society. Policy implementation is a phase in policy making that reifies the intentions of the decision makers at various levels. The County governmental level is a product

of a devolution process that aims to strengthen decision making capabilities of the population in pursuit of their unique development priorities. Arising from this study in Narok County, it is generally established that institutional actors subsist in the periphery of decision-making process, notwithstanding their stake in county affairs. The predominance of institutional actors ought to be tempered with popular participation that is embodied in the diversity of non-institutional actors in the county.

Statement of the problem

The implementation of local County Roads Policy at the county level has largely been dominated by the county institutions in concert with national government institutional support. This has diminished the local value contribution especially that of non-institutional actors to policy development for county-level roads which is domiciled in the County Spatial Development Plan and the County Roads, Walkways and Parking Bays Act, 2018. To add an insult to the injury, most of the areas in the county have inadequate and poorly developed roads which necessitated the suspension of the implementation of some of the planned and targeted projects in some instances, to wait for development of requisite infrastructure (NCIDP, 2022). Furthermore, the non-institutional actors have been sidelined by the institutional actors through a detachment strategy which has made it impossible to implement County Roads Policy effectively (Barasa et al., 2017).

Consequently, the county has experienced frequent protests from users over ineffective inclusion of non-institutional actors and the poor state of intra-county roads infrastructure. This has been evident in 2013, 2015, 2019 and 2021 as cited by the Kenya News Agency in 2021. Owing to this phenomenon, the non-institutional actors have been compelled to devise strategies that will grant them visibility in the implementation of County Roads Policy. This study therefore interrogated the effectiveness of non-institutional actors in the implementation of the County Roads Policy in Narok County with a keen focus on the strategies used by the non-institutional actors to foster their inclusion the implementation of the County Roads Policy.

Literature review

The available literature indicate that non-institutional actors play a crucial role in policy-oriented decisions especially in the pre-implementation phases. Their engagement in the implementation phase, however, tends to be minimal necessitating further critical insights. A critical look at studies done at the global level lends credence to the foregoing statement. For instance, Delphonte (2021) noted that the challenges underlying the effective implementation of road policy in the city of Genoa, Italy can be effectively dealt with through involvement of the non-institutional actors who possess unlimited means especially technological and financial capacity. Huang and Yang (2017) also noted that the challenges associated with implementation of key policies in China including federal road policy can be mediated through institutional reform including involvement of non-institutional actors, technology change and market reforms. On their part, Ruiz and Guevara (2020) noted that there was a deterioration in the Chilean County Roads Policy and this can be fixed only if higher priority is given to road maintenance and inclusion of non-institutional actors. The situation in Netherlands was not different as Van Geet *et al.* (2019) alluded that the implementation of her multilevel road policies had suffered a setback due to institutional incongruence. Accordingly, the need to exploit the land through construction of roads had been hampered by institutional differences (between institutional and non-institutional actors) within and between phases of the planning process. This scenario replicates itself in other European states (Reimann 2006, Cecil 2019, Bovan and Peric 2021). Bovan and Peric (2021) advanced their view by asserting that non-institutional influence entails a watertight methodology of exerting influence and lobbying for non-institutional actors. This research and analysis of legislative and regulatory proposals; collection of technical documentation in order to present the case and expressing the position, monitoring and reporting on the development of the process; attending parliamentary debates; organization of communication channels, media work and cooperation with coalitions interested in the same issues (Bovan & Peric, 2021). These sentiments are in tandem with the work of Spalding (2018) who insinuated that movements that build ties and use compelling collective action frames across sectors and scales tend to have more reach.

The study by Silva *et al.* (2018) assessed the force behind the thriving of political parties in public policy issues in Latin America. They interrogated the social movement and how interests and power resources form contending coalitions around policies and institutions relating to mega-development projects and how their efforts are shaped by underlying economic, social, and political structures and ideational factors. They established that activist lawyers are able to translate movement demands into legal claims in the framework of legislative and judicial processes have been important, as have movement organizations' capacities to frame demands in ways that resonate with that of the public. Protest discourses developed at earlier historical junctures usually become important for later mobilization and outcomes (Silva *et al.*, 2018). These studies, however, tend to concentrate on the pre-implementation phases thus exposing the gap in knowledge on the location of non-institutional actors in the actual implementation process. A more informative study isolates the role of mass media and computing cloud in implementing government policy (Singh, 2019). It showed that the involvement of the public is a key strategy that can be used to foster effective monitoring and controlling of government policies which culminates in effective implementation of policies. The main aim of the study was to combine the capabilities of cloud computing and social media analytics for efficient monitoring and controlling of public policies. The raw data for experimentation was collected from twitter.

In Africa, there are numerous studies that have been done on the implementation of national and local infrastructure policies. The literature, however, fails to address the place of non-institutional actors. According to the Africa Renewal Information Programme (ARIP, 2020), Africa faces serious infrastructure shortcomings across all sectors, as only a quarter of road networks in Africa was paved which impacted negatively on the private sector development and the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI). According to Kassa (2020) the key determinants of the delays and cost escalations in the federal road policy in Ethiopia were poor project management and coordination, inaccurate forecasting of schedule, psychological biases, and political interests. He suggested that practices such as rewarding well-performed contractors, improving the capacity of staff, making selective public-private-partnership, enhancing performance monitoring and information sharing would improve the situation. This was complemented by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2022) report on the traffic safety and road conditions in Ethiopia which stated that Ethiopia had the highest rate of traffic fatalities per vehicle as most of the roads are poorly maintained especially in rural areas with evidence of low involvement of non-institutional actors in the realization of quality road policy as envisioned by the Ethiopian Roads Authority (ERA) through the federal governments.

In South Africa, Howes *et al.* (2017) noted that the implementation of policies including environmental policies and county road policy had failed to materialize due to among others, a lack of incentives to implement policies, and a failure to communicate objectives to key stakeholders. This also alludes to the fact that failure to communicate the objectives of government to the stakeholders such as the non-institutional actors regarding the implementation of the local level roads policy in South Africa has thwarted the realization of quality roads in the country. Similar observations were made in Nigeria as the study by Yapicioglu *et al.* (2017) on the stakeholder's perspective on the implementation of federal road policy revealed. They noted that stakeholder innovative strategies in transportation and transportation infrastructure improvement have different roles and significant positive impact on the implementation of road policy which promotes sustainable economic development. Thus, there is need to involve the non-institutional actors so that their innovative strategies in transportation can be harnessed in the spirit of effective implementation of the federal roads policy. These African analyses are but an epitome of the prevailing roads policy implementation challenges in several other African notwithstanding their level of road infrastructure development (Ahmed and Monem 2020, Mwelu et al 2021)

The creation of county governments by the Constitution of Kenya (2010) created an extra layer of policy implementation to facilitate the attainment of national development goals through effective involvement of non-institutional actors. The constitution spells out the functions that have been devolved to county governments

with the objective of bringing services closer to the people and ensuring public participation in defining and charting out the development agenda at the grassroots level. Furthermore, various stakeholders (both institutional and non-institutional) should work with and within the county governments as part of the development efforts to provide accessible service infrastructure. The partners are instrumental in contributing towards setting of development objectives, implementation, and feedback mechanisms and also act as watchdogs in the use of public funds (Narok County Integrated Development Plan [NCIDP], 2022).

The literature indicates a general dismal embrace of non-institutional actors in the implementation of local roads infrastructure in most countries around the world. This, however, does not apply to the pre-implementation phases of policy making that may attract interest and lobbying processes targeting officialdom.

Theoretical framework

The study was pegged on the Social Networking theory. Ronald Burt (1992) developed Granovetter's original theory (1973, 1983) on the 'strength of weak ties' by arguing that the real value in weak ties lies in when they bridge between networks, and therefore become the conduits of knowledge, information, and value between those networks. Social networking theory focuses on the role of social relationships in transmitting information, channeling personal or media influence, and enabling attitudinal or behavioral change. Social networking theory focuses on the utility of social relationships among different actors in transmitting information, channeling personal, exerting media influence and enabling behavioral change.

According to Larson (2021), the study of social networks is being used to examine the nature of interdependencies between actors and the ways in which these are related to outcomes of conflict and cooperation. Areas of study include cooperative conduct among participants in collective actions for instance, remonstrations; promotion of peaceful behavior, social customs, and public goods within societies through networks of informal governance; the role of social networks in both intrastate conflict and interstate conflict; and social networking among politicians, constituents, and bureaucrats (Larson, 2021).

This theory can aid to establish is the strategy that the actors are employing to increase their impact. This can be determined through considering the patterns of their alliances and interrogating if the alliances are based on issues or ideology and if the strategy is earning them victory or not. However, one major weakness associated with this theory is that it assumes that every interaction is based on cooperation or conflict which must result into a significant influence. This may not be the case in all circumstances.

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive research design to unravel the strategies used by non-institutional actors to foster inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy within Narok county. The design was used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena and to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The design is fit for the study because the subjects were interrogated in a completely natural and unchanged natural environment. The study area was Narok county. It is located in the Rift Valley region in Kenya. The area has got a population of about 1,157,873 people based on the statistics retrieved from the KNBS website (KNBS, 2019). Narok county is one of the counties that are privileged to have a game reserve called the Maasai Mara game reserve. It is the home of the seventh wonder of the world. The main economic activities in the area are tourism, maize and wheat farming, pastoralism and stone excavation which need roads for movement of people and transportation of the products to different destinations.

Furthermore, it has several non-institutional actors perceived to be influential in policy issues. These non-institutional actors are political parties, CBOs, NGOs, media groups, households among others. Physical infrastructure plays a major role in development as they open up the area for other activities and links the county with other counties. The major players in the development of this sector are Narok County Government, KeRRA and Constituency Development Fund (CDF) (NCIDP, 2022). This implies that non-institutional actors

have been technically sidelined by the institutional actors in Narok county. The county has one major highway which links it with Nairobi city, Kisii, Bomet and Nakuru counties. The highway is approximately 130 Kms (from Mai Mahiu to Bomet). Narok county has a road network of 4,602 Km out of which the national government is in charge of 1,348km and the county government takes 3,254 Km. From the network, approximately 185 Km is tarmacked, 1,510 Km is graveled and 2, 907 Km is earth road (NCIDP, 2022). Even Narok town where crucial county offices are located lack elaborate roads since most of them do not have bitumen.

The NCIDP 2022 report further indicates that due to the bad terrain, most of these roads are unreliable especially during rainy seasons since most of them become impassable. Consequently, this poor state of roads has posed a serious challenge in the agricultural and health sectors hampering transportation of farm produce and accessibility to health services. The poor road network also impedes effective and efficient movement of security agencies within the county (NCIDP, 2022). Furthermore, according to the Kenya News Agency (2021), the county has been spotted on a number of occasions featuring in media for bad reputation on road policy tainted with demonstrations from motorists and other residents which raises the question of the quality of implementation of County Roads Policy and the involvement of non-institutional actors in the implementation of the County Roads Policy.

The study targeted the non-institutional actors that comprised of political parties, media, non-governmental organizations, CBOs and households as well as the officials who worked in the county department of public works, roads and transport.

Table 1: Target population

Target Population	Total Population (N)
Political parties	90
Media	132
Non-governmental organizations	160
Community based organizations	205
Households	241,735
TOTAL	242,382

Source (s): KNBS, 2019 and Narok County Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (2024)

The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. As for the non-institutional actors, stratified simple random sampling was used to get the elements in various categories who participated in the study. To be precise, the questionnaires were distributed to different non-institutional actors in the different categories such as media, political parties among others as indicated in the table for target population. This was accomplished through picking non-institutional actors within the various classes of non-institutional actors however being mindful of representativeness of the different non-institutional actors and gender balance. It is also important to note that members of non-governmental organizations, political parties, people from the media, CBOs and households who were adults (at least eighteen years of age) were the units of analysis.

The non-probability sampling technique of purposive sampling also called judgmental sampling was used to reach out to the policy implementers who work in the county department of public works, roads and transport. Only thirty percent (30%) that is, eighteen (18) of the key informants were used in the study. This is in line with Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) who alluded that a sample size of thirty percent is adequate for conducting

research. Furthermore, representatives of the non-institutional actors were used as key informants based on the accessibility (accessible sample) of the representatives. In determining the sample size for the non-institutional actors, the study borrowed a leaf from the sample size table derived by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to determine the sample size of the households. The sample sizes for the remaining non-institutional actors (political parties, media, NGOs and CBOs) were determined using Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) idea that a sample size of thirty percent of the total population is adequate for conducting a study. Below is a table with a summary of the target population and their sample size:

Table 2: Sample size

Target Population	Total Population (N)	Sample size (n)
Political parties	90	27
Media	132	40
Non-governmental organizations	160	48
Community based organizations	205	62
Households	241,735	384
TOTAL	242,382	561

Source: Researcher, (2024)

The study used mainly questionnaires and interviews as the data collection instruments. McLeod (2018), defines a questionnaire as a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The questionnaires were administered to all the non-institutional actors since it is a convenient data collection tool for a large number of respondents as well as its application to a population that is needed to give general data about the research problem. However, structured interviews were done with the officials in the county department of public works, roads and transports and representatives of non-institutional actors so as to understand their opinions on the problem of the study.

The pilot study was conducted in Bomet county because it bears similar characteristics as those of Narok county especially on county roads development and the involvement of non-institutional actors. The pilot study involved 58 respondents which is approximately 10% of the sample size. This 10% of the sample size was adequate for piloting as justified by Mugenda and Mugenda, (2012). This was necessary in establishing the reliability and validity of the research instruments. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. Interviews were recorded then transcribed verbatim with regards to the procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke, (2006) in an effort to do thematic analysis of the qualitative data. On the other hand, quantitative data was appropriate since meanings was derived from numbers and analysis was done through using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used as an appropriate tool for analysis of quantitative data. Descriptive statistics of measures of central tendencies: mean, frequencies and percentages together with measures of dispersion were computed to give a summary of the responses on all the statements. On the other end, the study used inferential statistics which includes Pearson correlation and simple regression.

Findings

The research study targeted 561 non-institutional actors ranging from households, political parties, NGOs, CBOs and media groups. However, only 426 questionnaires were properly filled and returned for analysis (see

table 4.1) which represents 75.94% response rate. This response rate is excellent according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) who noted that 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. Thus, this response rate was good for doing analysis and reporting.

Table 4: Actual population that participated in the study

Target Population	Sample size (n)	Actual participants
Political parties	27	22
Media	40	34
Non-governmental organizations	48	44
Community based organizations	62	50
Households	384	256
TOTAL	561	426

Source: Researcher, (2024)

The study sought establish the strategies used by the non-institutional actors to influence inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy. The responses of the participants were generated through administering questionnaires and conducting interviews with key informants. The quantitative data generated from the questionnaires yielded the following information:

Table 3: Analysis of responses on the strategies used by non-institutional actors to influence inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy

Statement	Response					Mean	Std Dev.
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
Non-institutional actors form coalitions so as to influence implementation of County Roads Policy	2.1%	6.8%	18.8%	52.3%	20.0%	3.81	0.904
Non-institutional actors attend county assembly and parliamentary debates so as to influence policy outcomes in implementation of County Roads Policy.	9.0%	5.6%	17.6%	50.9%	24.9%	3.93	0.855
Mobilizing public opinion can be a strategy used by the non-institutional actors to influence implementation of County Roads Policy.	1.2%	3.8%	13.1%	41.5%	40.4%	4.16	0.876
Pressurizing the government can be a way for influencing implementation of County Roads Policy by the non-institutional actors	1.2%	3.8%	11.0%	39.0%	45.1%	4.23	0.875
Monitoring and reporting on development matters can be a method of influencing implementation of County Roads Policy	6.8%	5.9%	9.4%	49.3%	28.6%	3.87	1.102
Collaborations between non-institutional actors and decision-makers can influence policy outcomes	5.9%	5.4%	11.5%	34.5%	42.7%	4.15	2.718

AVERAGE	4.37%	5.22%	13.57%	44.58%	33.62%	4.03
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Source: Researcher, (2024)

The analysis of the first item which sought to establish whether non-institutional actors use the strategy of forming coalitions so as to influence implementation of County Roads Policy shows that 2.1 % of the respondents strongly disagreed that non-institutional actors form coalitions to influence inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy, 6.8 % disagreed, 18.8 % were neutral, 52.3% agreed while 20.0 % strongly agreed with the statement leading to a mean response of 3.81 which suggests that majority agreed with the statement. On the second item which aimed at determining if non-institutional actors attend county assembly and parliamentary debates so as to influence policy outcomes in implementation of County Roads Policy, 9.0 % strongly disagreed, 5.6 % disagreed, 17.6 % were neutral, 50.9 % agreed whereas 24.9 % strongly agreed yielding a mean of 3.93 which signifies agreement with the statement.

The statistics on the third item show that 1.2 % of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that mobilizing public opinion can be a strategy for influencing the inclusion of non-institutional actors in the implementation of County Roads Policy, 3.8 % just disagreed and 13.1 % showed neutrality to this statement. On the contrast, 41.5 % agreed as 40.4% of the respondents strongly agreed resulting into a mean of 4.16 which also shows that majority of the respondents agreed with the statement. On the fourth item which sought to establish if pressurizing the government was a strategy employed by the institutional actors to influence inclusion in County Roads Policy implementation, the results demonstrate that 1.2 % of the respondents strongly opposed the statement, 3.8 % disagreed, 11.0 % were neutral, 39.0 % agreed while 45.1 % strongly agreed which translated to a mean of 4.23 which justifies the fact that most of the respondents agreed with the statement. The responses of the participants on the item that touched on monitoring and reporting as a strategy used by non-institutional actors revealed that 6.8 % of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 5.9 % disagreed, 9.4 % were not sure of what to say, 49.3 % agreed whereas 28.6% strongly disagreed. These responses led to a mean of 3.87 which is enough to conclude that majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that monitoring and reporting on development is a strategy for influencing the involvement of non-institutional actors in the implementation of County Roads Policy.

The response to the last item which sought to investigate whether non-institutional actors form collaborations with decision-makers to enhance inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy demonstrated that 5.9 % strongly disagreed with the statement, 5.4 % disagreed, 11.5 % were neutral, 34.5 % agreed while an incredible 42.7% strongly agreed which resulted into a mean of 4.15. This shows that the respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the statement that collaborations with decision-makers enhance the inclusion of non-institutional actors in the implementation of County Roads Policy.

Based on these findings on this objective, it is evident that majority of the respondents agreed with the items describing this objective with a total average of 4.03 which translates to 80.5 %.

The interviews carried out culminated into a theme on the various strategies that the non-institutional actors use to find a stage in the implementation of County Roads Policy. It was noted from the interviews that the idea of non-institutional actors being incorporated in the discourse of implementation of County Roads Policy cannot be exhausted without mentioning the mechanisms that the non-institutional actors use to foster their inclusion and relevance in the aforementioned discourse. This is as captioned below:

“Bro... let me tell you as a matter of fact that talking about the involvement of non-institutional actors is incomplete without exploring the strategies that they use to initiate and sustain their inclusion in the process of implementing County Roads Policy. My friend we cannot dismiss the conversation on how the non-institutional actors

intervene or get included in that process. It is very imperative in this dialogue.”
(Stanley-M-30-ENG-5Y)

A critical analysis of the codes that were generated from the interviews led to the observation that these strategies were either soft or hard/coercive strategies. For instance, the interviewee who had alluded to this theme alluded that the non-institutional actors have always been diplomatic, embracing peaceful means to find inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy. The participant was categorical on the use of collaborative tactics with the elected officials who make decisions regarding the process as stated in the following excerpt:

“The non-institutional actors employ many strategies in order to influence inclusion in the implementation of this road policy in our county. More specifically, they do oversight of county road projects through the elected members of county assembly. These non -institutional actors as I have told you they are not in government and for them to have a say...they constantly ensure that they are in touch with the area member of county assembly representing the various wards at the ground level...And this implies that they usually link up with policy-makers to ensure that they are included in the implementation of policies such as this one on county roads” (P1-M-30-ENG-5Y).

On the contrary, another interviewee indicated that the non-institutional actors have been very aggressive and coercive in their approach to enhance inclusion. The participant further hinted that being soft may not earn the non-institutional actors a place in the implementation of County Roads Policy. This is as stated below:

“My friend... you know even the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence as it is argued by believers. A-n-d... for these non-institutional actors to get a place in the issues of roads, they must use force. In fact, I can attest to the fact that they have been doing demonstrations and pressurizing the county government to include them so that we can fix the County Roads Policy through a collective arrangement” (P3-M-38-ACC-2Y).

The findings from the qualitative data on the non-institutional actors’ use of pressure to enhance inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy established that this strategy has been very useful and it is mostly associated with the households as per the suggestion given by one of the participants who was from the household sect:

“I think we (motorists) usually engage in demonstrations to pile pressure on the government when they fail to construct good roads... Like we demonstrated in London, Narok town over poor roads until the County government heeded to our concern” (P7-M-35-FAR-6Y).

Discussion

The objective of the study was to inquire on the strategies used by the non-institutional actors to enhance inclusion in the implementation of the County Roads Policy. The objective was also made up of several items that were presented to the participants so that they can state the extent to which they agreed with the statements that described it. Accordingly, an average mean of 3.81 which translates to 76.20 % was achieved on the first item which tested if formation of coalitions was a strategy used by the non-institutional actors to foster inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy. This shows that majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statement. These results lend credence to the work of Cecile, (2019) who alluded that when organized and rallied, non-institutional actors possess the power to influence the activities of institutions and government as well as businesses.

This is also in convergence with the sentiments of Spalding, (2018) who insinuated that movements that build ties and use compelling collective action frames across sectors and scales tend to have more reach. In addition, the findings resonate with the work of Silva *et al.* (2018) who assessed the force behind the thriving of political parties in public policy issues and found out that non-institutional actors with various interests and power resources form contending coalitions around policies and institutions relating to mega-development projects such as roads that affect the nation.

Additionally, since policy matters are about interests, it is important for the non-institutional actors to form coalitions with decision-makers and non-decision makers whose interests are aligned in the same direction so as to reduce tension in the coalitions and increase their chances of exerting influence in the implementation of the policy in question.

The second item on the sought to find out if non-institutional actors attend county and national assemblies as a strategy to promote inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy. The findings generated a mean response of 3.93 which is equivalent to 78.6 %. This echoes the research work done by Bovan and Peric, (2021) who studied the channels and methods used by the civil society to exert their influence. Though their focus was on climate policies, the findings of their results is in tandem with those of the current study which has established that non-institutional actors attend parliamentary sessions as a strategy for inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy.

These findings justify the fact that non-institutional actors such as NGOs, CBOs, nominated members of political parties among others have been cited in county and national assembly trying to voice the interests of their people and inclusion in key policy matters including the implementation of County Roads Policy. Their presence in the sessions prompts policy makers to give due considerations to their issues as the adage states that 'out of sight, out of mind and vice versa'. This also elucidates the Political Science saying that the best way to deal with a problem is by trying to be part of the process that yields solution and that an enemy (which refers to any force that stifles change and development) should be fought from within – implying that non-institutional actors should keep on taking an active part by attending county and national assembly sessions to influence the formulation and implementation of County Roads Policy.

The third item sought to establish whether non-institutional actors mobilize public opinion as a strategy to increase inclusion in the implementation of the County Roads Policy. The findings from the qualitative data revealed that this has been an obvious strategy employed by some non-institutional actors to gain a stance in the implementation of County Roads Policy. For instance, one of the journalists demonstrated that media has been utilizing this strategy to mobilize the public about public policies. Moreover, political parties have also been fond of using this strategy to get support from the public especially when they have issues regarding the implementation of County Roads Policy. For instance, one of the agents of the political parties stated as follows:

“Actually ... One of our strengths is mobilizing the public's opinion over certain issues when it comes to implementation of County Roads Policy...” (P9-F-24-PAG-3Y).

It was established from the quantitative data that the mean response to this item was 4.16 which is proportional to 83.2 %. This reveals that most of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that non-institutional actors mobilize public opinion as a strategy to enhance inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy. The study conducted in India by Singh *et al.*, (2019) on the role of mass media and computing cloud in implementing government policy showed that involvement of the public is a key strategy that can be used to foster effective monitoring and controlling of government policies which culminates in effective implementation of policies. This assertion has been backed up the findings of the current study whose focus was on assessing whether mobilizing the public opinion was a strategy employed by non-institutional actors not limited to mass media and computing cloud.

Furthermore, this finding is in conjunction with the provisions of Article 1 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 which places the citizens or the public and/or the non-institutional actors at the epicentre of the sovereignty of the Republic of Kenya. This implies that the affairs of the county and the nation by extension cannot be conducted without the conscious involvement of the public. Moreover, any changes to the existing policies must be done with the full knowledge and participation of the non-institutional actors. Furthermore, the principles of public policy analysis envisages that policy actors should have the interest of the public at heart so that policy issues reflect the needs, preferences and demands of the public. On the basis of the foregoing premises, it can be inarguably be stated that mobilizing public opinion is a splendid strategy used by the non-institutional actors to foster inclusion in the implementation of the County Roads Policy as revealed by the statistics of the study. This strategy is accompanied by pertinent relevancies such as legitimacy and increased support from the public. This means that since sovereignty lies with the public, non-institutional actors such as political parties mobilize the former to get endorsement of their activities and gain support for whatever they are agitating for.

The findings from the qualitative data on the non-institutional actors' use of pressure to enhance inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy established that this strategy has been very useful and it is mostly associated with the households as per the suggestion given by one of the participants who was from the household sect:

“I think we (motorists) usually engage in demonstrations to pile pressure on the government when they fail to construct good roads... Like we demonstrated in London, Narok town over poor roads until the County government heeded to our concern” (P7-M-35-FAR-6Y).

Quantitative data backs up this observation as examination of the responses given to the fourth item culminates into a mean response of 4.23 which is equivalent to 84.6%. This is a very strong mean that communicates volumes about the understanding of the respondents on the non-institutional actors' use of pressure to boost inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy. Spalding, (2018) was of the view that movements that build ties and use compelling collective action (pressurizing the government) frames across sectors and scales tend to have more reach. The object of his study was to establish the strategies used by non-institutional actors to gain visibility in policy matters in the context of the policy that had been introduced in El Salvador. From the foregoing thread, it can be explicated that the current study resonates with the work of Spalding (2018).

The statistics further reveal that pressurizing the government is a superb strategy that can yield good results since an increased pressure makes the government to succumb to the demands of the non-institutional actors paving way for inclusion in matters such as the implementation of the County Roads Policy. This finding also substantiates the grand work of Karl Marx that cuts across all fields including Public Policy, Political Science and Administration on the struggles that exist in the society. According to him, change is inevitable when pressure is piled on the ruling class that has continually suppressed its subjects. We cannot turn a blind eye to Niccolò Machiavelli, an Italian political thinker who is dubbed to be the “father of politics” who encourages the use of pressure to acquire recognition in policy issues by asserting that power is not given but rather sought for. In a particularistic sense, those who wish to be part of the policy making and implementing sect, they should not expect it to come on a silver platter rather, they need to pressurize the existing system of government until the former yields to their influence and apportion them the needs of their hearts. This can be construed that; inclusion of non-institutional actors become a reality if they level pressure on institutions of governance.

Monitoring and reporting on development were another item that was tested in the study. Findings from the qualitative data showed that non-institutional actors such as media have been embracing this strategy to gain a place in the implementation of County Roads Policy. Also considered as a contribution to the implementation of County Roads Policy, one of the participants revealed that it was a tactical way of enhancing inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy.

“We (journalists) usually monitor... the activities of the County government through our editorial teams to ascertain if there is efficiency and effectiveness in the realization of the County Roads Policy ...”(P5-M-25-JOU-4Y)

The findings of the quantitative data demonstrate that a mean response of 3.87 (77.4%) was achieved. This is sufficient to conclude that non-institutional actors use this strategy to win a place in the implementation of County Roads Policy. As such, the research findings lend credence to the work of Bovan and Peric, (2021) who observed that one of the channels and methods used by the civil society which is part of the non-institutional actors to influence policies was monitoring and reporting on development of the process. This implies that by taking up monitoring and reporting roles, the non-institutional actors find an avenue to be included in the implementation of County Roads Policy since the institutional actors try to compare the information in their database with the one generated by the non-institutional actors to reach compromise or establish a common ground. This is done in the best interest of averting conflict, inefficiency and ineffectiveness that might arise when the non-institutional actors are not recognized yet they possess very vital information generated from the monitoring and reporting process.

Furthermore, it is obvious and ubiquitous that when a policy is adopted, the next phase is implementation which comes with monitoring and reporting on the policy under implementation. At this point, non-institutional actors come on board to ensure transparency, efficiency and effectiveness through monitoring and reporting. This means that the non-institutional actors become a de facto party in implementation of the policy in question.

The last item that was scrutinized by the study was whether non-institutional actors collaborate with the policy makers so as to enhance inclusion in the implementation of the County Roads Policy. Qualitative data showed that this has been a strategy employed mostly by the households who team up with their elected leaders especially the members of the county assembly so that they can be part of the implementation of the County Roads Policy (see the subsequent excerpt):

“They (non-institutional actors) constantly ensure that they are in touch with the area member of county assembly representing the various wards at the ground level...And this implies that they usually link up with policy-makers to ensure that they are included in the implementation of policies such as this one on county roads” (P1-M-30-Eng-5Y).

Quantitative data established that the responses to this item culminated in a mean response of a whopping 4.15 which translates to 83 %. This affirms the strong conviction of the respondents that non-institutional actors do collaborate with policy makers to boost their chances of being included in the implementation of the County Roads Policy. These findings complement the work of Mack, (1997) who observed that establishing relationships or forming coalitions with decision makers is one of the most important strategies.

This, also echoes the work of Bovan and Peric (2021) who believed that non-institutional actors can use the strategy of creating strong relations with decision makers so that they get included in the policy process. This also lends credence to the contemporary manifestations of non-institutional actors being incorporated in the policy issues by the government agencies with an objective aim of dealing with the perennial problems affecting the society. A classic example is where the opposition (who are presumably non-institutional actors due to the fact that they lost in a general election and lack affiliation to the government of the day) collaborates with the government in a popular arrangement called “handshake” or “bipartisan dialogue” so as to address key policy issues affecting the nation. In so doing, non-institutional actors become enfranchised in the implementation of policies including the County Roads Policy.

Generally, the responses to the research objective demonstrated that an average of 4.37 % of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statements of the research objective, 5.22 % disagreed, 13.57 % stayed neutral,

44.58 % agreed while 33.62 % strongly agreed leading to a mean response of 4.03 which translates to 80.6%. This shows that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements that were tested to accomplish the research objective. By extension, the findings revealed that non-institutional actors in Narok county are making every effort to find inclusion and visibility in matters implementation of County Roads Policy. More importantly, mobilizing public opinion, collaborations with policy makers and pressurizing the government top the charts of the strategies used by the non-institutional actors to enhance inclusion in the implementation of County Roads Policy. All the strategies under study were scored at least 76.2 % showing that indeed the efforts of non-institutional actors to earn a place in the implementation of the County Roads Policy are immense and recognizable.

Conclusion

The study findings demonstrate that the non-institutional actors are making every effort to influence the implementation of the County Roads Policy. The study thus concludes that non-institutional actors are pushing for inclusion in the implementation of the County Roads Policy mostly through a number of strategies however, collaborations with policy implementers/decision-makers, mobilizing public opinion and pressurizing the government are the most dominant ones.

The study also concludes that the inclusion of stakeholders in the implementation of the County Roads Policy was a missing ingredient. The study builds on this phenomenon and recommends that policy makers should adopt a policy that will bring all stakeholders on board irrespective of their political ideologies, religion nor ethnic affiliation so that their ideas can be harnessed for better implementation of the public polices and greater good of the public by extension.

The study established that the roles of the non-institutional actors have not been clearly elaborated in the current policy where roads policy is enshrined. It is therefore recommended that the policy makers should make an effort of revising the policy document(s) to ensure that the place of all stakeholders especially the non-institutional actors is catered for in terms of their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of County Roads Policy.

The study also recommends the formation, sustenance and increasing of the visibility of non-institutional actor networks for better implementation of public policies for sustainable development. The study also recommends that policy makers and implementers should collaborate with the non-institutional actors in implementing the County Roads Policy since this strategy has proved to impact positively on the involvement of non-institutional actors in the implementation of County Roads Policy.

Limitation

The vastness of the county and language barrier hindered smooth and seamless data collection. However, the inclusion of research assistants helped to deal with these limitations through offering prompt access to different parts of the county and translating the questions to those respondents who did not understand English language.

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8.0 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest declared by the authors.