

**PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING IN THE CROSS
BORDER CONFLICT BETWEEN THE LUO OF UPPER NYAKACH AND
KIPSIGIS OF SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES: 1963-1992**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any other university.

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This project has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all women who have participated in peace building and reconciliation between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet Sub-Counties.

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I would like to express my gratitude to the almighty God for giving me strength and good health to complete my studies. This work is an outcome of the intercession of several individuals. While I thank all of them, I would like to express my deep appreciation to my thesis supervisors, Prof.Ndeda and Dr.Mwangi for providing guidance, encouragement, direction and advice while I carried out this study. Although my research work seemed to be a daunting and endless task, every moment of my supervisors' counsel was a great learning experience. Their insightful comments and critique of the drafts of this thesis contributed immensely to my research work.

I am grateful for the cooperation and kindness of my respondents, who spared their precious time to answer my inquiries. The respondents gave me invaluable information I needed to write this thesis. As a sign of acknowledgement and appreciation, I have listed all the interviewees in the reference list of this thesis.

Lastly, I am dedicating this work to my family members for their moral and material support during my studies. Moreover, I am humbled by the generosity of spirit, hospitality and commitment of my family members. The immense support they gave me during my studies enabled me to surmount many challenges. I thank all my friends for their encouragement and support during my research work. I take full responsibility for any errors, omissions and misinterpretations in this work. I hope this thesis will deepen academic knowledge and inspire many students in their academic pursuits.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the participation of women in peace building and reconciliation in cross border conflicts between the Luo of Upper-Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet Sub-Counties respectively after independence. The objectives of this study were to trace the causes and nature of conflict between Luo and Kipsigis; to examine the involvement of women in management of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis and challenges women have faced in management of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis. This study was carried out in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet. Two locations were purposively sampled. This study was guided by gender theory which articulates the social construction of relationships in society. It views the role of women as socially defined without any bearing to their biological differences. Data was collected using oral interviews and focus group discussions. Once the data was collected, it was analysed qualitatively. This study has revealed that conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis began before the advent of colonialism and have continued in the post-independence period due to a myriad of factors. Some of the common causes of these conflicts include boundary disputes, struggle to control pastureland, cattle rustling, negative ethnicity, political differences, proliferation of crude and sophisticated weapons, poverty, as well as depletion of natural resources. The respondents pointed out cattle rustling as the primary cause of the recurrent conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis. This study found out that conflicts have increased considerably between Luo and Kipsigis in the post-independence period due to the commercialization of cattle theft and the aforementioned factors. As noted by most of the respondents, it has been difficult to find a lasting solution to these conflicts because of recurrent cattle theft, which often leads to retaliatory attacks. Moreover, there is lack of commitment of the government security machinery to take punitive measures against cattle rustlers and perpetrators of violence. In terms of women participation in peace building and reconciliation, this study has revealed that Luo and Kipsigis women have initiated and are currently implementing many innovative strategies that have been instrumental in preventing and resolving conflicts between these two communities. Nonetheless, women's participation in peace building is not yet properly entrenched because of myriad social, cultural, economic, and political constraints. These challenges need to be addressed to enable women have an equal chance to participate in peace building and reconciliation. There should be gender mainstreaming in all peace building and reconciliation processes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

COGWO	-	Coalition of Grassroots Women Organization
DPC	-	District Peace Committee
ECOWAS	-	Economic, Community of West African States
LPI	-	Life and Peace Institute
LWI	-	Liberia Women Initiatives
NGO's	-	Non Governmental Organizations
PSW	-	Problem Solving Workshops
SWAN	-	Sudanese Women Association in Nairobi
SWVP	-	Sudanese Women Voice for Peace
UN	-	United Nations
UNIFEM	-	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WILPF	-	Women International League for Peace and Freedom
WMP	-	Women's Movement for Peace
WPP	-	Women Peace Programme

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Conflict-** to come into collision or disagreement. The process occurs between two or more persons (groups, organizations and states). When they have different points of views, different goals, different needs and values and fight over limited resources.
- Cross border-** is a territorial entity that is made of several or regional authorities that are co-located and belong to the same nation state. It could also be different states.
- Ethnic –** Is a socially defined category that may be based on common cultured heritage, shared ancestry, history, homeland, language or dialect and possibly other aspect such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, dressing style, physical appearance.
- Peace Building-** Interventions that are designed to prevent the start or resumption of violent conflict by creating a sustainable peace. Peace building activities address the root courses or potential courses of violence, create expectation for peaceful conflict resolution and stabilize society political and economically.
- Reconciliation –** Refers to restoring mutual respect between individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In Kenya women form about fifty-two percent of the general population. Therefore they constitute a vital national resource whose ideas, creativity and concern for social cohesion can help bring about positive change in the society (Sewak, 2005). Indeed women play an important role in perpetuating society. Like men, women contribute to social political and economic development. However, their contribution is hardly acknowledged because most women operate within the informal sector whose contribution is difficult to quantify.

Debates on women's issues have in the last few decades assumed prominence on the global agenda. Issues concerning women are important themes for meetings and conferences around the world. New laws have also been introduced to improve the lot of women. All these are positive developments and underlie the fact that in all human societies women do not enjoy the same status as men. It is in this context that debates on women's issues have generally been received enthusiastically. However, for the debates to be meaningful, women's voices need to be heard and included in the new political agenda (Lotta and Wellensteen, 2008).

Several studies have been undertaken focusing on the political, socio-cultural and economic positions of women in Africa. A number of these studies demonstrate the fact that women's roles in pre-colonial Africa varied extensively across Africa's multiple ethnic groups. In some societies, women exercised extensive authority (Barasa, 1997). Spadacine (1989) in her ground breaking study demonstrated that African women were economically productive and independent. On the area of leadership, scholars have established that in some societies women were leaders, councilors, and spiritual figures.

In the pre-colonial period, Kenyan women were political actors(Ndeda,1997). Among the Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet who were the focus of this study, elderly women were often consulted on a variety of issues. A few women even won leadership positions in councils of elders (Ndeda, 1990). Politics in pre-colonial society was inclusive in that it fused politics with the social and economic aspects of life.

Conflicts are generally an integral part of society, human relations, nature and existence. As such, conflict cannot be entirely eliminated in human relations (Solomon, 1999; Mwangi, 2006). There are various types of conflicts experienced in the world: Cross Border Conflict, Inter-Continental conflicts, Intra-Ethnic conflict and Inter-Ethnic conflict. With Africa experiencing Inter-ethnic conflicts in a wide scale across borders.

Inter-ethnic conflicts have been rampant in Africa for long (Mwangi, 2006). Scholars like Nnoli (1998) traces the origin of inter-ethnic conflicts from pre-colonial, colonial to post-independence eras in Africa; explaining the beginning of ethnic antagonism, the impact on colonization on inter-ethnic relations and how independent nations have handled such conflicts in West Africa. Rosita (2000) examines the socio-psychological, historical and political underpinnings of inter-ethnic conflict; particularly the ethnic, cultural and national identities that feed in group/out group antagonistic perceptions and continues the cycle of aggression.

Kenya, like any other African nation, has had her fair share of inter-ethnic conflict before, during and after colonial period. A number of scholars have studied such conflicts. Gecaga (2000) traces various causes of inter-ethnic clashes in Kenya. She shows that a cause like colonialism Balkanized communities into tribal cocoons through inter-ethnic barriers and isolation.

Oucho (1996) analyses the inter-ethnic conflict that engulfed Kenya's Rift Valley Province at the turn of the nineties when multi-party politics was being re-introduced in the country, bred a number of issues among them ethnocentrism. Rutto (2000) perceives that the outbreak of inter-ethnic clashes in parts of Rift Valley and Nyanza in 1992 as a demonstration of the ugly face of inter-ethnic relations. He argues that, the absence of a strong inter-ethnic structure was a source of ethnic biases, myths and inter-ethnic differences. Akinyi, et al. (2011) explains that independent African governments failed to make the necessary adjustments to counter the growing ethnic tensions among divided communities. The creation of new states also worsened the tensions. Barasa (1997) postulates that unsatisfactory nature of inter-state borders is a key cause of conflict among African states. Nearly all these borders were inherited from the colonial times, and were the product of negotiations and treaties between colonial powers, decided in Europe with the aid of poor maps and with scant attention to Africans.

The bottom line is that any type of conflict regardless of its causes, is inevitable so long as human society exists. All conflicts require solutions, and in the recent past, the emphasis has been on peace building and reconciliation in which the international community and others engage. It is one of the international concerns among scholars, politicians, administrators and institutions.

Despite many scholars emphasis on inter-ethnic conflict, peace and reconciliation, it is quite evident that the place of women has not been adequately clarified. Currently, there is evidence of emergence of literature that is beginning to discuss the involvement of women in inter-ethnic conflict, peace and reconciliation for instance; Becker (1997) investigated the role played by women in peace restoration rituals in the aftermath of the war. Lihamba (2003) studied women in peace building and conflict resolutions skills in Morogoro region of central

Tanzania and explored how women have coped with violent conflict. Mbede (1996) explored the place and role of women in the mediation of conflicts in the traditional society of Cameroon.

According to Spadacini (2001), within the Great Lake Region the International Alert launched a project through the women peace programme (wpp) in 1966, which was in response to the needs by women and women organizations working for peace in Burundi, Rwanda and other parts of the Great Lake Region. Ochwada (2000) mentions a few women who have participated in workshops, peace meetings and reconciliation at the regional level.

Since its advent in the 1990s, the democratization process has focused on the transformation of Kenya's institutions into democratic and broad based decision making structures. The wave has allowed women to become an important part of the peace dialogue. Yet, in spite of their considerable numerical strength, that is, constituting fifty-two percent of the population, women hardly involved in the peace keeping processes. As stated by Mwangi (1998) profound difference between women and men exist in peace keeping and peace building discussions. The Beijing platform emphasized the need for women to participate at all levels of the peace building process.

There is growing acceptance of women as participants in peace building and not simply victims of conflict. This recognition was reinforced by the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325(2000) and 1820 (2008) that recognized sexual violence as a security issue and tactic of war(Schirch and Sewak,2005).It also demands parties to armed conflict to adopt concrete prevention and protection measures for women and assert the importance of women's participation in peace building. This study brought to light the negative attitudes that men had

towards women which had led to marginalization of women in peace building process and conflict resolution among the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

In Kenya, the participation of women in conflict and peace building has been trivialized because many accounts of conflict tend to portray men as the primary peace builders and women as passive, naive sufferers. The stories of men as fighters and peacemakers tend to make it difficult to understand the active participation of women in peace building during war. The stereotyping of women as mere victims of war has led to the failure of the recognition of their contributions towards peace building activities. Women hardly ever have equal access to resources, authority and decision-making prior to, throughout or after war as men do. Moreover, domestic chores and family responsibilities truncate women participation in leadership and decision-making processes.

There has been an increase in the participation of women in conflict management; however, such efforts have not been given much attention in scholarly discourses. In light of the above gap, this study examined the participation of women in peace building in Sigowet and Upper Nyakach 1963 to 1992.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How did the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet relate before 1963?
2. How did women participate in the management of conflicts between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet from 1963 to 1992?

3. What challenges did women face in conflict management between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet from 1963 to 1992?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following:

1. Examine the relations between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet before 1963.
2. Examine the participation of women in management of conflicts between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet from 1963 to 1992.
3. Examine challenges women faced in management of conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet from 1963 to 1992.

1.5 Research Premises

1. Conflictual relations persisted between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet before 1963.
2. Women initiated various ways of managing conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet since 1963.
3. Women faced gender-based challenges in the management of the conflicts between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet between 1963 and 1992.

1.6 Significance and Justification of the Study

There are many scholarly works published on Kenyan women in general (Feam, 1961; Ochieng', 1968; Ominde, 1987; Ndeda, 1991). There are a lot of literature on the history of both the Luo and the Kipsigis, covering pre-colonial and post-colonial periods, but there has

been limited studies on the inter-ethnic conflicts between the two Nilotic communities. Whereas there are many volatile inter-ethnic borders in Kenya, the researcher focused on the inter-ethnic border of the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet sub-counties. The reasons for narrowing down to this important inter-ethnic border and its conflict includes factors like; first, the age of the conflict as recorded by scholars like Toweett (1979), who notes that the conflict existed during the migration and settlement of the Nilotic communities from their original homelands. Secondly, the changing patterns of economy and land which have been pivotal to the two communities, which centrally affected their economic activities of pastoralism and subsistence agriculture. Finally, population expansion resulted to unhealthy competition of scarce resources like pasture and water, essentially affection creation and accumulation of wealth.

Nonetheless, most studies seldom pay attention to the experiences of women in armed conflict situations in Kenya and their contributions towards conflict management. This study covered post-independence period with an aim of understanding whether independence had any impact on women participation in peace building and reconciliation. Luo and Kipsigis women were chosen for the study because they are living in the volatile area with continuous conflicts that are very risky for the women of the two communities and none of the communities had plans to leave the area so the conflict would continue. Women are known to be peace makers and as such, the research established their role in the process of peace building and reconciliation in the study area.

The study covered the period 1963 to 1992. The period may seem short but given the nature of the issue the researcher wanted to tackle, it was appropriate. 1963 was chosen because there was a serious conflict that occurred between the Luo of upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of

Sigowet as a result of land problem. The two communities were in the process of settling in their present day homeland. Undefined boundaries became the cause of contestation (Huntingford,1953). 1992 was the first major conflict in Kenya that involved chasing people away from their homeland. It marked the period when multi-party politics was introduced into the country for the first time during Moi's era. Different political parties were formed based on ethnic lines. Cross border conflict between the two communities worsened with the introduction of multi-party politics, since they belonged to different political parties. It was marked the famous Rift Valley conflict (Akinyi,2011).Finally, 1895 was appropriate moment to give the researcher the historical background of the pre-colonial inter-ethnic conflict in the area of study. Although the period may not be the core feature of the study, the period is used as a baseline for past occurrences.

Whereas there were other conflicts, the conflict between the Luo of upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet seems to be a very old one which started before colonial rule and has never been resolved. The researcher settled on Sigowet and Upper Nyakach as study area not only because of the age of the conflict, but also on the proximity of the study area to the researcher which eventually allowed for adequate research with the limited time and finances. Luo and Kipsigis had fought over land and boundaries, unlike after independence, the face over conflict now is cattle. The other known conflicts are of recent times caused by colonial rule due to land alienation for example Luo and Nandi, Gusii and Kipsigis conflicts were instigated by colonial rule(Toweett,1979)

This study has filled an existing knowledge gap in history of women by examining the role of Luo and Kipsigis women in peace building and the challenges they face. Even more importantly, a gender analysis is essential to a better understanding of the effects of conflict,

peace and security on men and women and the processes that produce them. Such an approach, can help in the consolidation of any gains realized in the previous interventions and can bring to the limelight new strategies that can be used to curb conflict. By shedding light on the experiences of women in conflict management, this study has enriched the existing knowledge on inter-ethnic conflicts in Kenya. This study was conducted in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties because the protracted conflict in this area has not been properly examined from a gender perspective.

The findings of this study on the role of women in peace building in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties is critical in contributing new knowledge on gender and peace studies in history, and hence bridge the existing historical gap. The study also will be very useful to peace building agencies in solving inter-ethnic conflicts.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study only focused on the participation of women in peace building and reconciliation in cross-border conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis. Geographically, this study covered Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties because the area is prone to inter-ethnic conflicts. Moreover, no systematic study has been carried out on the engagement of women in peace building in the cross-border conflict between Luo and Kipsigis communities.

Some of the challenges that were experienced in this study included the following. First, it was difficult to access some informants due to geographical and logistical constraints. For instance, poor transportation in some parts of the area of study, as well as harsh weather conditions (heavy rains) hindered the researcher from accessing some respondents. The researcher cancelled the interview schedule and chose another day when the weather was favourable. Some of the interviewees were also difficult to find because they had busy schedules.

Second, some informants were reluctant to give information because they felt that this study focussed on sensitive issues, such as cattle rustling and conflict. For instance, members of the provincial administration were reluctant to give information touching on security matters. This was overcome by constant assurance that the research was purely an academic study.

There were limitations encountered during oral interviews. For instance, distortions and variations of information in personal recollections, posing many challenges in attempting to analyse the data gathered. The researcher overcomes this challenge by doing comparison to find out the truth from different sources.

The other challenge encountered while collecting the data from oral interviews was the in-ability to provide specific dates when the referred events occurred. This forced the researcher to estimate the dates the events could have taken place by using the seasons or information from other sources. The researcher also faced hostility with some informants who thought the researcher was a government spy. The researcher overcomes this by seeking assistance from the area chief who assured the locals that the research was purely academic.

These challenges were surmounted by using field assistants from the area of study and conducting many oral interviews to bridge the gaps in the data collected. The logistical challenges were overcome by seeking funds to facilitate research activities.

1.8 Literature review

1.8.1 Introduction

The literature review for this study is related to the four objectives, namely: the nature of relations between the Luo and the Kipsigis before independence; the causes of conflict between Luo and Kipsigis from independence; the participation of women in management of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis after independence; challenges women have faced in management of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis after independence.

1.8.2 Causes of Interethnic Conflicts

In writing about conflicts in Africa, both Owuor (2002) and Spadacini (2001) observe that most of the conflicts have been fought and solved by men. For instance, in the case of Burundi conflict, peace talks were male-dominated and women were side-lined seriously. During the Burundi peace talks, men argued that women were not party to conflicts. However, such a chauvinistic argument is parochial because it fails recognize the challenges women face whenever war occurs (Spadacini, 2001). Moreover, it is erroneous to argue that women are not party to conflicts, yet they usually contribute to peace building either directly or indirectly. This study sought to find out whether Luo and Kipsigis women have been party to conflicts and peace building. It also investigated the factors that impede women from active participation in peace building and reconciliation.

In examining conflicts in Africa, Porter (2005) noted that research on conflict has been preoccupied with “explanations of the deterioration of the conflict situation and the management of the conflict” (p.31). Those focusing on the causes emphasize the “contradictions of globalization and the attendant intensification of identity-based struggles for control of power and resources, contradictions of simultaneous economic and political reforms, difficulties in

transition, flawed democratization, declining state capacities and diminishing resources and the proliferation of small arms” (Porter, 2005; p.34-35). Much of this research is gender blind. Similarly, Baines contends that the gender audits and gender-sensitive programmes pay little attention to methods and ethics and “obscure complex dynamics within the violently divided societies such as wider political and economic contexts but also intersections of ethnicity, age or class and gender” (Baines, 2005, p.140).

Many scholars have linked the politicization of ethnicity to the occurrence of many conflicts in Africa. According to Githaiga (2010), ethnicity itself rarely causes inter-ethnic conflicts unless it is intertwined with politics. Research evidence further indicates that in countries where ethnic conflicts have occurred in Africa, there have always been political incitements behind it. Politicization of ethnicity normally occurs in circumstances characterized by unequal sharing of resources. Such a model leads to ethnic consciousness where people begin to identify themselves as more important than others. At the centre of this scenario are the elites who, feeling excluded or threatened with exclusion, begin to invoke ethnic ideology in the hope of establishing a reliable base of support to fight what is purely personal and/ or elite interests(Githaiga, 2010). This study confirmed the arguments of Githaiga (2010) that there is a link between politics and ethnic conflict in Kenya.

A number of scholars have studied conflicts in Kenya. For example, Gacaga (2002) notes that inter-ethnic clashes in Kenya are caused by the negative impacts of colonialism, such ethnicity, land alienation and the creation of artificial boundaries. Other causes of inter-ethnic clashes include opportunism, unfair distribution of economic resources and political power on ethnic lines. These studies provided guidance on the causes of interethnic conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet. Oucho (2002) contends that inter-ethnic conflicts in

Kenya have been caused by a host of factors, which include, but are not limited to ethnicity, politics and cattle rustling. “Ethnic conflict exploded at the height of political engineering which ushered in the era of multi-party democratization in Kenya. This conflict appears not to be a historical accident, but a well-orchestrated scheme in which land and ethnicity were used as scapegoats” (Oucho, 2002, p. 24). The findings of this study also revealed that politicians from Rift Valley province planned and funded the ethnic clashes. However, the involvement of women in Rift Valley conflicts was not discussed by Ouch. This gap has been filled by examining the participation of Luo and Kipsigis Women in conflict management.

In a similar vein, Rutto (2000) contends that the outbreak of inter-ethnic clashes in various parts of the Rift Valley and Nyanza provinces in 1992 was as a result of inter-ethnic tensions. He further avers that the absence of a strong inter-ethnic structure was a source of ethnic bias, myths and inter-ethnic differences. This manuscript was relevant to this research because it pointed out the causes of the 1992 inter-ethnic tensions in Kenya. Nonetheless, it did not discuss the participation of women in the same. This study has bridged that knowledge gap by discussing the participation of women in peace building and reconciliation in the aftermath of the 1992 ethnic clashes.

In writing about ethnic conflict in Kenya, Oyugi(2002) notes that although colonialism has been largely blamed by many scholars for the rise land clashes in Rift Valley, the policy of willing buyer willing seller that the government adopted soon after independence, in his view, was the major problem. He argues during the Kenyatta regime, many people from central province bought land in Rift Valley, especially in the most fertile areas such as Nakuru, UasinGishu, Nandi, Trans Nzoia and Narok. “The land in the said districts traditionally belonged to the Kalenjin, Maasai and hindered groups such as the Samburu. The new comers in the post-

independence period included the Gusii, Luo and Luhya, who moved into and bought land that bordered these districts. This new settlement continued in spite of opposition by the indigenous ethnic groups of the Rift Valley (Oyugi, 2002, p.15-16). Therefore, land squabbles gradually caused tensions in Rift Valley, which eventually culminated into the 1992 land clashes, which were instigated by politicians from Rift Valley. Oyugi's analysis of the causes of Rift Valley conflicts is relevant to this study because it has helped in understanding the link between land disputes and intertribal conflicts. This study has found out that border disputes are partly responsible for the historical conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis.

Most conflicts in Nyanza and Rift valley are caused by three main factors, namely cattle rustling, land and politics (Akinyi, Kabongah & Ombok, 2011). For example, among the Kipsigis and Luo. Cattle rustling is the major cause of conflict, which started before colonisation. There is also an intricate relationship between environmental degradation and conflict. The drying up of rivers, the disappearing trees and forests, the changing climate, the shortage of the land, and ultimately the shortage of good food harvests are matters of concern within the three provinces. Scarcity of resources easily leads to violent outcomes. For instance, with the drying up of rivers and other conventional water sources, the pastoral communities now have to depend on wells which, being smaller in size, lead to more conflicts between groups competing for water (Akinyi et al., 2011). By examining the social, economic and political causes of conflicts in Kenya, this study acted as a benchmark for examining the causes of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis communities.

Although depletion of natural resources somehow contributes to conflicts, some scholars have a contrary opinion. According to Barasa such analysis fails to clarify why the clashes that erupted in 1991 followed a pattern of taking place in ethnically diverse regions, and more

importantly, why the government was unenthusiastic to deal steadfastly with the perpetrators of aggression (Barasa, 1997). Moreover, some security analysts tend to anchor their arguments on the role of the state in democratization and opening the political arena in the 1990s, particularly with the repeal of Section 2(a) of the constitution, which made Kenya *de jure* a one party state in 1982. Repeal allowed other parties and different political articulations that challenged the Kenya African National Union (KANU), whose power was beginning to erode. The KANU ruling clique was uneasy over the prospect of losing the second multiparty election since independence. To ensure victory, they created zones of support that paralleled ethnic configurations (Akinyi et al., 2011). The ethnic zones were designed to isolate populations supportive of opposition parties. For the state, such communities, defined in ethnic terms, were perceived as enemy populations of doubtful allegiance, whose political actions would be difficult to control.

Since the advent of multi-party politics during the 1990s, this political dynamic has been a key factor leading to the incitement of violence around elections (Mwagiru, 1998). Crucially, there has been a failure to hold accountable those responsible for past human rights abuses, including the ethnic clashes of the 1990s, abuses under the Kibaki presidency, and land-grabbing and economic crimes, despite the naming of many senior politicians in successive enquiries. In these circumstances, it was not illogical for politicians to believe that they could get away with trying to manipulate elections or incite violence (Mwagiru, 1998). Although Mwagiru's study pointed out politics as a key cause of conflicts between communities, he did not examine the contribution of women toward conflict management, which this study has examined.

The politicisation of ethnicity has become the single most intractable problem in Kenya, especially since independence. This was clearly demonstrated by manipulation of ethnic ideology for political survival with the advent of Multi-Partysm as experienced in the Rift Valley

region during the run up to the 1992 multi-party elections; the Mombasa clashes on the eve of the 1997 general elections; the constitutional referendum of 2005 and which exploded with the post-election violence following the bungled 2007 elections (MYWO, 2011). The study on the causes of ethnic conflict by MYWO was relevant to this study because it informed the examination of the causes of conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

In pre-colonial times, land was communally owned and traditional rights and obligations ensured direct access to all. Colonialism disrupted these relationships. Colonial authorities assumed that all land to which private ownership could not be established by documentary evidence was ownerless (Okoth, 1999). The colonial government parcelled out more than 7 million acres of land, including some of the most fertile land in Kenya, and earmarked them for cultivation by Europeans (Mwangi & Ndung'u, 2001). These areas came to be known as the white highlands. Indigenous ethnic communities who had occupied these areas were relegated to marginal reserves and all land not in their occupation was declared crown land. This resulted in overpopulation in the reserves and, as a result, significant numbers of Luo, Gusii, Luhya, and Kikuyu migrated to the Rift Valley province as squatters and to provide labour on settler farms. White settlers restricted the possibility of establishing land rights. Therefore, when independence was attained, and power was seized by a conservative fraction of Kenya's rural society, the first order of business was to settle issues of investment and private property, including land rights. Sharp disagreements arose as to who would get reversionary interest in the highlands (Waki, 2008). This article points out various causes of ethnic conflicts in Kenya; hence, it formed a basis upon which the skirmishes between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet were examined.

Political leaders create conflict anchored on community, clan and personality cleavages by instigating politics that disenfranchise perceived ‘enemy’ voters during electioneering period or when need arises (Waki, 2008). However, it is clear from the findings that politicians play a double role in influencing the dynamics of conflicts. Whereas they are acknowledged as holding sway in defining (discordant) inter-group relations, they are also viewed as critical actors in conflict resolution by a significant proportion of Kenyans (Akinyi et al., 2011). This confirms the fact that political leaders are central to determining the status of conflict or peace in an area.

The youth are the most susceptible to political manipulation. They are the pool from which most politicians’ draw their support. They are also the bulk of party youth wingers and organised gangs whose utility in political violence comes in handy whenever required. A comprehensive youth empowerment program is essential in breaking the youth’s exploitation in spreading politically motivated mayhem (MYWO, 2011). Although this study identified youth vulnerability to political violence, it did not examine the women vulnerability to politically instigated ethnic conflicts, which this study has examined.

In an attempt to focus understanding on conflicts, there have been several attempts at clustering the causes in Kenya, regionally and globally. The GOK/NSC analysis (2011) clusters the conflict causes under into political dimensions, security dimensions, economic dimensions, socio-cultural dimensions, legal dimensions and environmental dimensions. This kind of conceptualization of conflict formed the basis for analysing the causes of conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet. However, this study found that there were no particular causes of the conflicts. Rather, each conflict was context-specific, multi-causal and often multi-dimensional and resulted from a combination of factors, which included, but were not limited to boundary disputes, cattle theft, ethnicity and politics.

1.8.3 Women in Peace Building

Ochieng (2002), in her article, “*The Scars on Women’s Minds and Bodies*,” investigated the impact of war on women and discussed how they coped during war. This article also described the peace building actions they undertook, highlighting Betty Bigombe’s attempts to get Joseph Kony to the peace table; local women negotiating for peace with their sons, brothers and husbands; and the various organizations formed to support women survivors, including the role of Isis-Wicce (Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange) itself in documenting these peace initiatives (Ochieng, 2002). Consequently, by analysing the participation of Luo and Kipsigis women in peace building, the experiences of women conflict resolution in Kenya was brought to the fore.

There are still gaps in terms of the prevailing explanations for the disjuncture between policy formulation, implementation and a continued patriarchal system in which women remain disproportionately affected by conflict and general violence (Hendricks, 2011). The gaps in Hendricks work point to a need for more empirical work on monitoring and evaluation of existing policies and programmes in Africa. According to Hendricks (2011), there is urgent need to collate data and analyse the contributions of women who have been part of peace negotiations, peace missions, security-related parliamentary portfolio committees, and the few who have made it to the upper levels of security institutions. This, study filled the lacuna by documenting the experiences of in peace building between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

Solomon (1999) noted that a few women participate in peace building and reconciliation process and peace talks aimed at preventing and resolving conflicts. He asserts that despite their contributions in provision and nurturing, women's efforts are ignored, rarely recognized and all together not rewarded. This is in spite of the fact that women contribute a highly motivated and

able group of stakeholders for peace building. This study revealed that Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women have played major role in peace building.

Omtatah (2008) avers that retrogressive cultural and traditional practices, such as son preference ideology, lack of belief in the importance of educating girls, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, bride price collection, widowhood rites and disinheritance of girls and women are some of the ills that impede the quest for women's leadership in Kenya. He further notes that poor socialization where boys are prepared for leadership and girls for domestic roles also works against women's ascendancy to leadership. This study has confirmed Omtatah's arguments that gender insensitive cultural practices have militated against the ascendancy of women to high decision-making institutions including peace building and reconciliation.

While many studies show that conflict occurs with the involvement or acquiescence of women, several studies portray women as a principal driving force in peace initiatives (UNESCO, 2002). Women generally show a keen interest in peace processes. However, the *rituals* of peace often preclude their full participation. When peace negotiations and rebuilding destroyed economies become formal exercises, women fade into the background. Other peace activities by women, such as reviving economies and rebuilding social networks, are seen as peripheral to the formal mechanisms, and have received little recognition.

The United Nations resolution 1325 underscores the significance of women's equal participation in the promotion of peace and security (UN, 1995). The resolution calls on all actors involved in peace building and implementation of peace agreements to adopt gender perspectives. For instance, there should be gender mainstreaming in all measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous process of conflict management. The UN statutes informed this study and providing guidelines for interrogating the extent to which women have

participated in peace building between Luo and Kipsigis. This study has revealed that the low participation of women in peace building and reconciliation has led to the ineffectiveness of many peace-building processes. Therefore, this study recommended gender mainstreaming in peace agreements.

Despite the emphasis on inter-ethnic conflict, peace and reconciliation, it is quite evident that the place of women in peace building has not been given much attention. Worse still, women constitute a small fraction of participants in peace management projects and receive less attention in post conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation activities. This situation is evident right from grassroots level where the role of women in peace building has remained invisible. This challenge is further exacerbated by the fact that there is a dearth of literature on participation of women in peace building and reconciliation. On the other hand, there is a plethora of literature on participation of men in conflict and post war reconstruction. Currently, some scholars have adopted a new paradigm of conflict analysis by adopting a gender perspective. This is evidenced by a few studies that have attempted to discuss the involvement of women in inter-ethnic conflict, peace building and reconciliation. For instance, Becker investigated the role played by women in peace restoration in the aftermath of ethnic conflicts in West Africa (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008). This study has enriched the scanty literature on women participation in conflict resolution by documenting the experiences of Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women in conflict situations.

The Beijing platform for Action (1995) observes that failure to include women as stakeholders in peace process means their experience as peacemakers are not incorporated and utilized in peace negotiations (United Nations, 1995). Their exclusion result in peace, which fails to address sufficiently issues that include demobilization and rehabilitation of women and girl

soldiers, the continued violence against women refugees, lack of address for the human rights violations and abuses women sufferers. It further emphasizes the crucial role of women in the period of armed conflict and disintegration of communities. This report underscores the crucial role women can play in preservation of social order and as peace educators at domestic and community levels. The findings of this study confirm the assertion by the UN that women play a critical role in peace building.

Monica (2000) argues that women are always the majority of victims in conflict situations not because they physically vulnerable, but due to their special maternal responsibility. Therefore, she observes that most women would rather become refugees together with their children, rather than sitting and watching them die during conflict. The study sought to find out the consequences of the low participation of women in peace building.

Hendricks (2011) argued that since women are the worst victims of war and conflict situations and the ones who understand the full potential of implications of destructions, then it follows that they should ideally be the majority of stakeholders in peace negotiations. In this regard, she highlighted the need to recognize and tap women's unique skills and talents in peace building process. This study found out that despite the fact that women are always the majority of victims whenever Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet fight, they have not had an equal opportunity to participate in peace building and reconciliation.

Porter (2005) in her study found that women are more committed to finding long-term solutions to conflicts than men. She notes that women have been more instrumental in fostering peace in many conflict situations because they possess special qualities like negotiation and bargaining skills that place them at a better position to solve disputes and conflicts amicably (Hendricks, 2011). Other potent qualities that women possess include emotional strength to

transcend pain and suffering and their predisposition to peace that provides them with greater potential for peace making. She argues that measures that help women to work together towards peace building should be adopted.

Murunga (2000) avers that as oppressed members of most societies, women are unique in the sense that they can empathize with rival victims during war. Such compassionate feelings enable them to deal with conflicts situations in a better way than their male counterparts do. He argues that given the horrid experience of women in war and conflict situations, their participation in peace should be given due attention. He further notes that owing to their roles as producers and reproducers of households, women's approach to conflict resolution are less confrontational compared to men. Murunga's analysis informed this study by providing a deeper insight into the psychological factors that shape the attitudes of women towards peace building and reconciliation.

Brownell has studied the participation of women as agents of peace building and conflict resolution in Liberia. She notes that since 1990 women organizations have been active conflict resolution at regional and international levels (Brownell, 1996). These organizations have participated in many conferences and signed documents calling for an end to war and the formation of democratic governments. She affirms that various conflict situations create double role for women. These include leading the household, bread winning and home making roles. She further observes that the death of male combatants and their displacement exposes a heavy burden on women. Women often suffer the most whenever people are displaced or become refugees because of war. This is because they are always compelled to take care of children, the old and the sick under precarious conditions generated by war. Besides, they have to perform other life sustaining responsibilities such as household chores, fetching water and firewood.

Brownell (1996) study provided a good foundation for investigating the impact of war on women, in general, and the kind of suffering the women of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet have endured, in particular, because of inter-ethnic conflicts.

In Sierra Leone, women groups have had peace demonstrations and prayer sessions (Spadacini, 2001). In 1995, the women groups coalesced into women's Movement for Peace (WMP). It was founded with the aim of resolving, through peaceful negotiations, the civil wars related conflict in Sierra Leone and thus was at the forefront in advocating for peace and representative government. WMP put more pressure on the government and united front of Sierra Leone (RUF) to negotiate for ceasefire. WMP had a number of meetings with the government and rebels sides in an effort to reach a negotiated settlement that was achieved with the ceasefire on 29 November 1996. WMP played a critical role in the relative success of the 1996 presidential elections and the massive civil disobedience against the Koroma Junta that took over in a military coup in May 1997 (Spadacini, 2001). It is the aim of this research to find out if there are roles that Luo of Upper and Kipsigis of Sigowet women can play in peace building and reconciliation process involving the two communities that are involved in cross border conflict.

Spencer (2002) contends that conflict and development or lack of it is related. She observes that most of the violent conflicts stem from deeply rooted social economic injustices often related to identity, politics and extended periods of relative deprivation. Competition for power, resources and prestige are the key causes of conflicts. For example, in Kenya and Nigeria competition for limited resources and state power has been the root cause of inter-ethnic conflict as: inability of state to execute its roll towards its citizenry such as exercise of justice and fair distribution of resources at the expense of others (Spencer, 2002).

Spadacini (2001) posits that women are often depicted as the "victims" of conflict while men are depicted as "aggressors". According to her, this stereotype negates the role of women as perpetrators and supporters of violence. According to African rights (1998), during the Rwandan genocide women played a role in gathering information feeling and sheltering the infiltrators. Further women participated in military operations. Female spirit medicines were moral boosters while some groups of women encouraged the escalation of violence through singing ululating and beating drums. In addition, women were used to map out the "enemy" concealed weapons, and carried bullets inside their hair and guns inside the bundles of firewood (Spadacini, 2001). The forgoing views show that women participate in war and violence. This study found out that women participated in the 1992 ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley Province by supplying the warriors with war logistics and intelligence.

Spadacini (2001) decries the fact that in spite of the involvement of women in conflict prevention and reconciliation at the grassroots, there has been prevailing tendency to sideline women during peace negotiations processes. She attributes this situation to political and economic marginalization of women. Women's role as political players is ignored, prohibited or looked undermined. She gives example of Burundi peace talks when male delegates told facilitators that women are not parties to this conflict. This is not their concern; we cannot see why they have come, why they bother us. "We are here and represent them" This kind of argument is one of the reasons that could widely explain why women are sidelined from many peace processes. She further avers that women can ably make peace just as much as men do or even better. She further noted that women are more experienced than men are in making peace than in waging war because of the way they have been nurtured in the society. Women's skills in peace building emanate from the gender roles that society traditionally ascribes to them.

Rutto (2000) perceives outbreak of inter-ethnic clashes in parts of Rift -Valley and Nyanza in 1992 as a demonstration of the ugly face of inter-ethnic relations. He argues that the absence of a strong constructive inter-ethnic social structure was a source of ethnic biasness, myths, stereotypes and misinformation exacerbating inter-ethnic differences. The 1992 clashes led to serious war between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet, resulting into many deaths. He states that there was a simmering animosity between these two communities from pre-colonial times due cattle rustling and poor land demarcation. He contends that cattle theft must be stopped in order for peace to prevail between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet (Rutto, 2000).

According to Maina (2000), managing inter-ethnic conflict is challenging because interest groups sometimes want to benefit from the same conflict they want to manage. She cites examples of Kenya's political establishment, which during the inter-ethnic clashes of 1992 and 1997 exhibited partisanship in quelling of the clashes. This is tantamount to selective management. This, however, revealed that women engaged in peace building not for personal gains, but out of the desperate need to restore peace and harmony between Luo and Kipsigis.

Mwagiru (1998) notes that, there are various approaches that can be applied in solving inter-ethnic conflicts. Judicial arbitration is classified under coercive conflict resolution mechanisms. The non-coercive methods include negotiations, mediations and problem solving workshops (PSW). The non-coercive methods are quite flexible because they applied when both parties to a conflict are willing to solve a given dispute. He further observes that negotiations and mediations are the best methods of solving conflicts because they do not use force. For example, many protracted inter-ethnic conflicts have been solved through problem solving workshops. Mwagiru (1998) further notes that none of these conflict resolution mechanisms has offered

long-term solution to inter-ethnic conflicts. This study examined various strategies women apply in conflict prevention and resolution and found out that they are indeed effective in fostering peaceful coexistence between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

1.8.4 Challenges Women Faced in Peace Building

In the regions of Upper Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties the women were side lined in the peace process historically for long. However, they turned the situation in their favour and thus started getting involved in peace process. Various scholars have not recorded that despite the success women have achieved in taking part in peace process, women faced various social-political and economic challenges. It is important to note that although the study focused in Kenya, the region of Upper Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties, most of the sources and works used to analyse the challenges are from other countries. These works provides important points of basing the study, as well as analysis of challenges women faced in their efforts to brake peace between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet.

Hunt and Posa (2001), writing on the role of women in peace building in India and Pakistan, portray women as capable agents of change in the society. Women served as peace mediators, and organising humanitarian assistance to the affected areas. In their involvement, they faced physical assault, arrests, demonisation and even isolated by the government. This work though based in India and Pakistan, is essential in analysing the various challenges women of Upper Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties faced as it provides a framework for analysis.

Alaga (2010) notes that women in West Africa faced immense violence from the inter-tribal clashes in the region. In the article '*Challenges for Women in Peace building in West Africa*', she argues that since the late 80s, West Africa has been a hotbed of violent conflict and

wars, from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and in Senegal. The challenge for women groups and organisations working for peace is how to make connection between the various conflicting parties involved. This work is relevant to the study, as it provides an important basis to analyse the challenges faced in the various strategies used in peace-building among the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women.

Kershaw (1997) in her book *'Mau Mau from Below'*, although the work downplays the importance of women in the Mau Mau rebellion. It gives important challenges faced by Mau Mau women fighters. Women were arrested and incarcerated alongside their male counterparts in the rebellion by the British colonial masters. Although this work mentions some aspects of Kenyan women's history, still there is need for more studies focusing on other women such as the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women living in the volatile area.

In his works on ethnic conflicts in Kenya, Nyakuri (1997), observes that peace-building efforts by women in most parts of the country faced serious challenges due to the fact that communities continue to, consciously or unconsciously, rely on ethnicity to perpetuate their dominance and hegemony in an atmosphere characterised by scarce resources, fear and prejudice. This work provides important facts on the numerous challenges faced by Luo of Upper and Kipsigis of Sigowet women in their effort to bring lasting peace between the two communities.

Conclusion

In the Kenyan context, it has been observed that women not only faced numerous challenges in their quest for peace, but also existing work is insufficient both in scope and ethnographically. The voices and actions of the illiterate and less privileged women, have not been captured well, and this calls for historical inquiry. This study attempts to do so, by using

oral history interviews, with immense support of historians, political scientists, anthropologists and sociologists to explore a specific example of Kenyan women's agency in the area of peace building and conflict resolution in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties.

1.8.5 Theoretical Framework

A number of social science scholars have put forward theories to explain the occurrence of ethnic conflicts. Some of these theories, which also explain the concept of ethnicity, include modernization, conflict and gender theories. The relevance of each theory to the study was examined, and the most appropriate adopted.

Modernization theory also referred to as the competition theory, views ethnic conflict as result of mobilization competition for scarce resources tied in a modernized society (Mozaffar, 1995). Modernization process entailed the process of nation building, which implies shared national characteristics among social groups and hence an increased homogeneity in the society at large. Modernization was aimed at eroding ethnic consciousness and forging national cohesion. However, the process in turn perpetuates the salience of ethnic groups and in struggles for access to scarce resources and political representation. Modernization theory fails to take into consideration the fact that inter-ethnic conflicts began before modernization.

Horowitz (1998), points out that no single theory can exhaustively be used to explain why people fight along ethnic lines whereas there are other categories of identification like class, or profession among other causes. This research acknowledges the insufficiency of any single theory to explain the ethnic conflicts in Kenya, which was the core of the study. Therefore, conflict and gender theories were instrumental in examining the causes of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis, as well as participation of women in the process of peace keeping respectively.

Conflict theory focuses on the ways the society is shaped by economic forces. This theory is based on the assumption that every society is a system of relationships and social arrangements that are shaped by economic factors. Conflict theory as advanced by Galtung (1969) involves a critical investigation into the causes of the conflict, structure and dynamics of the conflict, the actors in the conflict and the outcomes.

The theory holds that at this stage, the personalities and personal perspectives of the individuals will emerge and the conflict-taking place will be maintained by show of interests, positions, feelings and outside pressures on the parties. It asserts that whoever is involved in the conflict needs a deeper understanding of the conflict and get a factual account to be of value. The root causes of the conflict, the parties in the conflict and their roles and interests in order to bring to an end or reduce the conflict are investigated. This theory guided the investigation of the causes and consequences of the recurrent conflicts between the Kipsigis and the Luo.

Gender is a constitutive element encompassing social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes (Scott, 1992). Gender simply refers to the distinction of male and female, the femaleness and maleness and the social constructs and expectations that influence the way in which gender identity and differences are perceived. Gender is also about power relationship between the women and men. The changes in representations of power in any social organization will always correspond to changes in the organization. However, the direction of the change may not be one way. As an encompassing element, gender involves interrelated elements such culturally available symbols which have multiple representations. Consequently, the women historian reads the various symbols and the contexts that are used, in various situations.

Gender also has normative concepts, which set the interpretations of the meaning of the cultural symbols. These symbols are expressed in religious, educational and political doctrines of a people. For instance the structure of patriarchy has been used to ensure the continued dominance of men over women. The term also had different meaning and weight in the pre-colonial era and in the colonial and post-colonial era. For example, the view of men as the 'natural leaders' was different in the pre-colonial era where women also had political space in Africa. During the colonial period the women were excluded from politics and decision-making organs (Scott, 1992, p. 27).

This also brings us to the fact that gender is a subjective element, meaning that historians need to examine the ways in which gendered identities are substantively constructed and relate their findings to other activities, social organizations and other cultural factors. Gender also provides a way to interpret meaning and to understand the connections among various forms of human interaction. The gender theory will be adopted because of its integrationist approach to the study of women's history. This theory calls for more than simply including women in areas closed to them such as politics and decision-making, or righting previously unfair legislation, for we are interested not only in how women appear in politics but also why they appear in the ways that they do.

This study uses Conflict theory to identify and analyze the various root causes of the inter-ethnic conflict in the study area of Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties. The theory engenders the concept of conflict, where it analyses women not just as mere victims but also important actors in seeking solutions to the conflict. The gender theory is also used to analyze the gendered transformation that the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women have undergone in the post-colonial period, where they now took active roles in finding solutions

and maintaining peace. Moreover, even though Kenya attained her independence in 1963, Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women in particular remain marginalized in the peace building processes. Gender theory is used to explain the impediments facing women in the peace building processes and to show how these impediments can be eradicated.

1.9 Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used in this study. It explains the research design, target population, sampling procedures, sample size, data gathering instruments and analysis procedures.

1.9.1 Area of Study

This study was carried out in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties. Nyakach was carved out from Nyando Sub-County in 2010 due to political and administrative reasons (refer to Map of Nyakach Sub-County figure 3.1). It shares a common border with Rachuonyo Sub-County to the South, Gusii to the South East, Kisumu to the North and Kericho County to the East. Upper Nyakach has 10 locations and 21 sub-locations. It is covering an area of 176 Km². According to Nyanza development plan, 2010, the area has a population size of 74,352. There are 38,718 females and 35,534 males, which imply that for every 100 females there are 99 males (Sub-county Development officer, oral interview, October 12th, 2012).

Upper Nyakach is endowed with natural resources, such as fertile soils, water from river Sondu. It receives high amount of rainfall per annum and experience a moderate temperature, which favours production of crops, such as millet, beans, finger millet, sweet potatoes, bananas, fruits and a variety of vegetables. However, maize is the most widely grown crop, supplying the

staple food locally. Besides crop production, livestock rearing is widely practiced in this area. Apart from agriculture, trade is another significant economic activity. Sondu market is the main trading center that attracts buyers and traders from Luo, Kipsigis and Gusii communities.

Sigowet Sub-County is currently divided into seven locations, with Kapleltet location being the centre of the conflict (Refer to map Sigowet Sub-County figure 3.2). It covers an area 163 km². According to Rift Valley development plan, 2011, the area had a population of 67,928 individuals. There are 33,716 males and 34,212 females, which imply that in this area, women are more than men (Sub-county development officer, oral interview, October 11th, 2012). There are two communities that are neighbors to Sigowet -the Gusii and the Luo. Today, the Kipsigis are mixed farmers, but in the past, they were predominantly pastoralists.

1.9.2 Research Design

. Qualitative research method was the primary approach used in the field work. It incorporated, semi-structured oral interview. The strengths of this approach derive mainly from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations, of people and its emphasis on words rather than numbers.

This study was focused on capturing the experiences of women in peace building through their own voices, and expressions, thus qualitative research method was deemed appropriate. Qualitative research tends to capture a participant's unique experience and makes meaning out of that particular context. Qualitative research utilizes description and interpretation to capture the meaning of people's experiences.

Patton emphasizes that:

Qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there... it attempts to understand the nature of that setting...what it means for participants to be in the setting, what their lives are like, what is going on for them, what their meanings are...and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting. The analysis strives for depth of understanding (Patton,1987).

More importantly, qualitative research is more valuable in conducting social research in Africa because it contextualizes the topic of investigation, while deriving greater meaning from the natural setting of the participants. In addition, qualitative research emphasizes on obtaining the insider's view of situations and events, revealing the extent of the problem, while presenting an in-depth understanding of the situation as well.

The study utilised various sources such as travellers' records, missionary reports, archival information and oral interviews as primary sources. During the research, archival information was scanned at the Kenya National Archives (KNA) in Nairobi from 2013-2014. These sources included detailed records on the contribution of the colonial administration in the peace building process. The researcher utilised communications from African colonial chiefs on the roles of women in peace initiatives(KNA/PC/NZA1/22).

1.9.3 Target population

According to Nyanza Development Plan 2010 Upper Nyakach has a population size of 74,352. There are 38,718 females and 35,534 males. According to Rift Valley Development Plan, 2011, Sigowet Sub County had a total population of 67,932. There were 33,716 males and 34,212 females. The total population for the study was 142,280.

1.9.4 Sampling Population

Upper Nyakach Sub-County has ten locations and Sigowet has seven. Given the complexity and expansiveness of this area, two locations were sampled from each of the two Sub-Counties.

The samplings of the two locations were picked as a result of factors like: One, their proximity to the border between Upper Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties. Two, their actual involvement in the violence, the residents were either perpetrators or victims of the violence. Finally, the level (magnitude) of effect of the conflict on the residents of the two locations sampled.

1.9.5 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling procedure was used to select key informants for the study based on their knowledge of the role of women in peace building and reconciliation, and their participation on reconciliation process. Snowballing technique was used to select many informants from the sample population. In this case, each informant suggested names of other informants who were knowledgeable. Through this technique, the researcher was able to access many male and female informants.

The study population encompassed men, women, women leaders, village elders, members of the provincial administration and religious leaders that reside in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties.

The researcher initially planned to interview a total number of 150 respondents but settled on 100 because the information given was being repeated which was a sign that the

research had reached saturation point .Plus, the research was going to utilise other sources of information to gather sufficient data for the study.

50 people were interviewed from each community, who included 30 young (men and women), 30 middle aged (men and women), and 40 the elderly (men and women). These sampled population were residents of the area during the period of the study. The researcher considered this sample population to be suitable and significant because they may have participated in the conflict and peace talks, hence being in a position to provide the study with valuable information. The sample was also considered suitable because it enable the researcher to come up with representative data that reflected the views of the general population.

With the help of research assistants who spoke both languages (Luo/Kipsigis) the following category of respondents were purposively sampled

- Elderly men and women aged 65 years and above.
- Male and female participants aged between 30-60 years of age.
- Village elders and members of the provincial administration.
- Religious leaders and other officers with knowledge.

The elderly explained the role women played in peace building and reconciliation processes before independent period and what the society expected from women in order to participate in peace processes. The youths, who were mainly involved in the fight explained the factors that instigates the conflict and the position of women during conflict. The community leaders explained the initiatives taken to bring peace among the two communities and the role of women in peace building and reconciliation.

1.9.6 Data Collection Methods

1.9.6.1 Oral Interviews

Oral interviews were used to gather qualitative data (Appendix 1). Respondents were asked questions about the causes of inter-ethnic conflicts, women's contribution to peace building and reconciliation and strategies that were used to mitigate inter-ethnic conflicts.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher personally. Before the beginning of each interview, the participant was informed about the nature of the study. All the interviews were conducted in *dholuo* and Kipsigis; the local vernacular languages of the two communities. Since the researcher hails from the Luo community, *dholuo* was quite appropriate as a media of communication. The interviewing process began with the researcher according to the participants the opportunity to provide personal biographical information, followed by general questions. This helped the respondents to relax and regain their composure as well as re-establish their authority and confidence as experts in the field of study. This initial process was important because, as possessors of the relevant knowledge, they needed to feel in control of the interaction. The researcher then moved to core questions relevant to the study. The open-ended structure of the questions permitted the researcher to raise supplementary questions whenever unanticipated patterns emerged. Yet, the focus of the study was maintained throughout the whole interviewing process.

The participants were free to raise other issues of concern that they felt needed attention, depending on their personal understanding and viewpoints. In the process, the participants had a chance to reflect back on their careers through the interviewing pattern, as the interview revealed the respondents' perspectives on how they perceived their peace engagements as outsiders in peace talks. The interviewing process ensured direct accessibility to peoples' ideas, thoughts,

and memories in the respondents' own words rather than in the words of the researcher. This is vital for the study of women in peace building, since it breaks centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether, or having men speak for women.

In some interview sessions, the researcher had respondents who were quite talkative. At most times, this worked to the researcher's advantage as more information was revealed without interruption, extensively covering almost all relevant issues. Such freely and plainly spoken responses created openings for further questioning. At times, some of the respondents spoke with deep feelings, particularly in recalling certain unpleasant conflict experiences. From their voices and revelations, it was clear to the researcher that the peace building terrain is very bumpy for female peacekeepers.

The researcher wrote down the respondents' responses and other observations relevant to the study. The researcher documented the settings, underlined phrases and words used that had meaning and could assist in recalling the true picture of the facial expressions, emotions and body language that conveyed some message at the time and could be translated into written when working on research data.

Field note taking is recommended by social research scholars as essential in qualitative research(Bogdan,1992). Field notes refers to the" written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study. The notes help the researcher in visualising each research participant using non-verbal cues, facial expression as the interviewing setting becomes live again. R.C. Bogdan and S.K. Biklen (2007) points out the importance of field notes to qualitative researchers that:

Your audio tape misses the sights, the smells, the impressions and remarks made before and after the interview...but field notes provide the stud with a personal log that helps the researcher keep track of the development of the project, to visualize how the research plan is progressing as by the data collected and remain self-conscious of how one can be influenced by the data collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p.57).

Thus, the interaction with the respondents provided insights on gender and politics, especially on the persistently cultural forces working against women's struggles for personal empowerment and initiatives.

Apart from field notes, the researcher also used a tape recorder to record the conversation, with the participants. The tape recorder made it possible for the research to capture any information left out during note taking. After the interviews, the information later fully transcribed.

1.9.6.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions helped in gathering information about the contribution of women towards peace building. A focus group discussion guide was used to guide the discussions. Participants discussed the causes of conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet and the contribution of women in peace building and reconciliation. The participants also made recommendations that can be used to foster peaceful coexistence between these two communities. Since the discussion was focusing on conflict issues, some participants initially were quite uneasy to divulge information regarding cattle rustling. The researcher overcomes this challenge by explaining to the participants that the study was basically for academic reasons and was not meant for profiling cattle rustlers.

1.9.6.3 Key Informant Interviews

The key informants were purposively sampled based on their knowledge of historical cross border conflict between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet and the role of women in peace building. A key informant guide was used to guide the researcher during oral interviews with political leaders, peace ambassadors, women leaders, religious leaders and members of the provincial administration. Oral interviews brought out individual women's experiences in conflict situations and peace building activities. Fortunately, the researcher was able to get additional information during the oral interviews because some of the respondents voluntarily provided extra information from their personal archives, such as newspaper cuttings, photographs and magazines, which described conflict and peace building.

1.9.6.4 Sources of Secondary Data

A part from primary data, archival data was also used to examine related materials from Kenya National Archives with regard to information such as: the role of women in the construction of gender relations, women's role and values in pre-colonial and colonial era.; the establishment of the colonial rule and early interaction between the colonists, the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet community; the significant changes among the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women participation in peace building and reconciliation process. The secondary sources was collected from written materials such as, unpublished theses on conflict and conflict resolution, journal articles on the subject, books, and dissertations, periodicals, seminar and conference papers, public documents, and official records, local dairies, magazines among other. Apart from the Kenya National Archives, secondary data were also derived from various library and documentary centres like Kenyatta University

Library, University of Nairobi Library and Maseno University Library. These divergent sources were weighed against each other in order to establish the gap.

1.9.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data analysis of this qualitative research incorporated the following steps transcribing the raw data from audiotapes to, text from organizing the data, generating categories, themes and patterns, coding the data, testing the emergent understandings, and writing the thesis. The selected theoretical framework was also used to analyze the data before the writing began. Documentary review and content analysis was also done. This involved corroborating documentary data with oral data to cater for external and internal criticism. Finally, all the data collected was used to support the research premises and form the basis of researcher analysis and interpretation.

The data analysis for this study started in the field as the researcher was recording and transcribing the data as the researcher tried to make sense of the data. Data analysis involves the careful search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain the existence of those patterns (Singleton, 2005). Data analysis helps to reduce text to the fundamental meanings of specific word. These reductions make it easy for researchers to identify general patterns and make comparison across texts. Therefore the aim of data analysis is basically to decipher meanings and understanding from the text (Osamba, 2000).

The interviews were transcribed and coded to check the adequacy and consistency of the themes. After which the data was classified into several categories and themes in relation to the research premises. Coding categories was used to sort the descriptive data. Coding refers to data reduction through the process of sorting raw data into categories. That is, the researcher reads

and reviews documents and data identifying and highlighting strong quotations marking participant's statements with highlighter pen.

This study used a thematic and chronological approach in the data analysis. That is the data was checked in relations to who said what, who said different things and how often. During the data analysis the researcher read and reread the transcripts, marking out important points, ideas, and looking for emerging patterns and connections (Osamba,2000). After sorting out the data content into categories the contents were used to descriptively represent the bigger picture of the study.

Documentary sources also formed an important component of this study. The documentary and archival sources were text analyzed. The researcher read and reread texts to gain an overall sense of the contents, and then the contents were put into several common categories. In analyzing the content the texts were transferred onto index cards, coded and analyzed together with other generated data.

Data gathered from the written documents and oral interviews were interpreted, and finally analyzed within the theoretical framework and study objectives to explain the peace building transformation that has occurred among the Luo of Upper-Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

CHAPTER TWO

NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LUO AND KIPSIGIS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE IN 1963

2.1 Introduction

The Kipsigis are the southernmost and most populous of the Kalenjin people of Kenya. The term Kalenjin is of recent origin. They spoke a common language, albeit with distinct dialects, that was termed "Nandi" by the British. Since ethnic unification, it has been referred to as Kalenjin. The eight groups which decided to join forces in order to obtain greater cultural and political visibility consisted, and still do, of Kipsigis, Nandi, Terik, Marakwet, Keiyo, Tugen, Saboat and Pokot (Kipkorir&Welburn, 1973). Prior to the British colonization, some of these Kalenjin sub groups were further sub-divided. The Kipsigis occupy a portion of the highlands in southwestern Kenya that is roughly contiguous with the present boundaries of Kericho District (KNA,DC/NN 1953). The terrain is composed of steep ridges, interspersed with numerous rivers and streams, which gradually give way to gently rolling hills and grasslands.

Kipsigis and the Nandi came from a place called "Too" which some of them locate near Lake Baringo. In the course of their southward migration, sometime between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Kipsigis and the Nandi separated. Today, the Nandi are their immediate neighbours to the north. Pushing farther south, Kipsigis displaced the Luo, Gusii, and Maasai, the descendants of whom are currently their neighbors to the west and south (KNA/DC/KS/1/1, 1908-1912, p.157). The Kipsigis once called these people *puniik*, meaning "enemies" or "strangers," although relations with these populations were never completely hostile. Relations with the Maasai were often characterized by fierce competition for grazing land. Despite reciprocal cattle raids, Kipsigis and Maasai intermarried and occasionally adopted

one another's children. Exchange with the Gusii seems to have been more frequent, particularly in times of famine, when Kipsigis would exchange cattle for Gusii grain (Goldschmidt, 1976).

Before the imposition of colonial administration, ethnic boundaries between the Kipsigis and their neighbors seem to have been quite fluid and permeable. The arrival of the British (around the beginning of the twentieth century) radically transformed Kipsigis society. White settlers alienated nearly half of Kipsigis land. Through a series of pressures and inducements, the Kipsigis were gradually drawn within the orbit of the colonial market economy (KNA/NZA/1910-1911).

According to reconstructions based upon oral history, various lineages that constitute the modern Luo settled in their current homeland in Kenya after complex and lengthy series of migrations that began in the late fifteenth or sixteenth century and continued through the end of the nineteenth century (Ogot, 1997). Nyanza was previously occupied by Bantu-speaking peoples who were both absorbed and displaced by the several streams of infiltrating Luo. The early Luo settlers first entered the portion of Nyanza that lies north of the Winam Gulf (the current Siaya County) from eastern Uganda as part of a series of migrations of Nilotic-speaking people out of southern Sudan. By the mid-eighteenth century, several Luo groups expanded out of this area and spread over South Nyanza as well. This whole process involved sequential displacements of earlier Luo settlers and Bantu groups by later arrivals, as well as the assimilation of many Bantu groups. The nineteenth century witnessed the most aggressively militaristic phase of expansion, especially into lands held by Bantu (Luyha) groups to the north. These ongoing population movements were halted by the imposition of British colonial control at the end of the nineteenth century when the territories of the various Luo subgroups at that moment were cartographically inscribed as the boundaries of the administrative sub-districts.

2.2 Conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis in the Pre-Colonial Period

Conflicts between the Luo and Kipsigis were triggered by the following social, economic and cultural factors during the pre-colonial period. The Kipsigis were predominantly pastoralists before colonialism (Bet, oral interview, August 5th, 2014). Therefore, access to good pastureland greatly influenced their economic success. On the other hand, cattle keeping was one of the economic activities of Luo. Consequently, both Luo and Kipsigis struggled to control good grazing fields, especially during dry seasons when animal pasture was inadequate (Omolo, oral interview, July 17th, 2014). For example, whenever there was drought, Kipsigis pastoralists grazed their livestock along the Sigowet border and some of them allegedly encroached on Luo farms. Therefore, disputes over grazing land often caused conflicts between these two communities.

Culturally, the Kipsigis believe that God created cattle for them (KNA,PC/NZA,1916). Therefore, according to the Kipsigis, Luo should move to the lake and practice fishing and not keep cattle because they were predominantly anglers and not pastoralists. Thus, the Kipsigis believe that they were culturally justified to raid cattle in Luo land. However, this way of thinking reveals constructed history since history of migration and settlement in Kenya and traditional economic practices show that Luo were pastoralists (Akinyi et al., 2011).

Indeed, before the advent of colonialism in Kenya, a cattle raiding was the most prestigious of all the Kipsigis sports within the traditional culture (Too, oral interview, July 11th, 2014). It was a significant aspect of a young man's identity. Nonetheless, the most admired movement culture was dance. This was because of the fact that a cattle raiding was a solely male activity, while members of both sexes could participate in dance. It is worth noting that among the Kipsigis, cattle raiding could be interpreted positively and negatively (Schilling & Opiyo,

2012). It was regarded as positive if, for example, Kipsigis raided cattle from the Maasai or Luo. In that case, the Kipsigisso much as a way of regaining celestial property did not regard it as robbery (Magut, oral interview, August 5th, 2014). Nevertheless, should Kipsigis warriors raid cattle from fellow Kipsigis, this was regarded as pure robbery and the thieves were then legally responsible to be publicly cursed and socially detested. “The reason for cattle being the object of both negative and positive raiding was due to the fact they were of very high social and economic value” (Sands& Linda, 2010, p.123).

Traditionally, the Kipsigis warriors practiced cattle raiding to restock lost cattle (after famine, diseases and raids). Even more importantly, possession of many cattle was a sign of prosperity, in practical, as well as in emblematic terms (Sands & Linda, 2010). As explained by one of the informants, culture played a significant role in perpetuating cattle rustling. For example, newly initiated Kipsigis warriors were culturally compelled to raid cattle because they demanded several animals to pay bride price (KNA,KSI/27). This meant that a man who owned many cows was able to marry several women and, thereby, had many children (Misik, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). Moreover, an in-law who paid more cattle for dowry was highly valued in the Kipsigis community, and it was not an issue how the cattle were obtained, even if robbed, particularly from the ‘enemies’ –the other tribes. Traditionally, if one successfully robbed cattle, he was deemed a hero. Another cultural practice that, to some extent, indirectly promoted cattle rustling was the taking of the oath of secrecy during initiation. This aspect of initiation made the Kipsigis averse to reveal the identities of cattle thieves in their community (Ojwang, oral interview, August 9th, 2014).

A cattle raiding was essentially a war game in which young warriors risked their lives in order to obtain societal status and economic prosperity (Ojwang, oral interview, August 9th,

2014). They had to run on occasion over one hundred kilometers in order to reach settlements with abundant cattle and then go back with their spoil (Murgor, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). Groups that varied considerably in numbers from a mere handful to as many as five hundred warriors did conduct raids. The raids required proper planning and serious restraint as the aspect of surprise had to be observed vis-a-vis the adversary in order to optimize the gains. In most cases, cattle raids were executed before dawn while most of the people were still a sleep, but from time to time, they could be carried out during the day (Byengo, oral interview, July 14th, 2014). It was imperative to get the stolen cattle home as quickly as possible, preferably before the victims of the raid could take up the pursuit. Once the stolen cattle were brought safely home, they were then distributed according to a properly established pattern (Yego, oral interview, July 15th, 2014).

During the pre-colonial period, the following norms were observed during cattle raids. First, brutality was discouraged during raids (KNA,KSI/27). Second, cattle raiders were to steal a maximum of three calves from a homestead. Culturally, they were not sanctioned to steal bulls and cows. Moreover, if a bull bellowed, when raiders entered a homestead, they were supposed to terminate their raiding expedition (Onyango, oral interview, August 6th, 2014). Third, if a child cried in a homestead, during a raiding incident, the raiders had to leave immediately without stealing any cattle. Last, if raiders encountered a gazelle on their raiding expedition, they had to terminate their mission because it was a sign of bad omen. These cultural norms regulated cattle raids and prevented raiders from being brutal to their victims. These cultural norms, according to one of the respondents, are no longer observed. This has led to serious brutality in the contemporary cattle rustling activities in which raiders behead their victims, confiscate all their animals and then raze their homesteads (Onyango, oral interview, August 6th, 2014).

Whenever the Kipsigis raided the Luo, the latter would revenge by raiding animals from the formers territory. Retaliatory raids sometimes escalated to conflicts, especially if many animals were stolen and not recovered. At times, the Kipsigis warriors would link with Luo cattle thieves and transport the cattle to the border (Ojwang, oral interview, August 9th, 2014). When the cattle reached the boundary, the Kipsigis raiders would take the cattle and pay their Luo collaborators immediately or later depending on their mutual agreements. Conflict frequently arose when animals were traced across the ethnic boundary and the Kipsigis resisted the tracing process or denied the existence of stolen animals in their territory (Tum, oral interview, July 20th, 2014). According to the respondents, most of the cattle that were stolen were from Luo land, Gusii land, Kipsigis land, as well as Maasai land (Apondi, oral interview, August 20, 2014). Generally, the communities from whom cattle had been stolen went looking for their cows and if they were not found, the tracing community tended to take back any cattle they found on their way back, triggering armed conflict (KNA,PC/NZA 1/22).

As noted above, constructed histories and cultural practices among the Kipsigis and Luo underpinned cattle rustling practices by creating contradictory community perceptions and attitudinal orientations (Akinyi et al., 2011). For example, the conviction by the Kipsigis that Luo are anglers and not pastoralists serves to encourage the Kipsigis community to accept and tolerate cattle raids targeting Luo villages. In this manner, therefore, cattle raids serve an ego-boosting function not only for the individual participants but also for their community as a whole (KNA,PC/NZA1/22).

2.3 Conflict Resolution and Peace building Between Luo and Kipsigis before Colonialism

Before the advent of colonialism in Kenya, Luo and Kipsigis solved their disputes through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (Kosei, oral interview, July 15th, 2014).

Whenever, inter-tribal conflicts occurred, they were solved amicably by the council of elders. Indeed, the institution of elders was greatly respected (KNA,DC/NN 1947). Elders were seen as dependable and well-informed individuals in the community matters. This enabled them to make informed and rational decisions in matters related to peace building and reconciliation. Luo and Kipsigis leaders organized conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives. Peace talks were often held at designated places along border. The process of peace building was quite elaborate and followed various procedures (KNA,DC/NN3/2-20)). First, elders of each community held separate meetings before organizing an intertribal peace meeting. This enabled them to identify the causes of and solutions to a given conflict. After that, leaders from both Luo and Kipsigis communities convened a joint peace meeting to solve a given dispute (Akumu, oral interview, August 8th, 2014). During conflict resolution, emphasis was placed on understanding the causes of a given conflict. During such meetings, livestock theft, according to one of the informants, was often cited as the primary cause of conflicts.

Most of the respondents noted that inter-tribal peace talks were effective in resolving disputes, but they did not offer lasting solutions to conflict because perennial animal thefts led to recurrent conflicts. The sidelining of the youth (key perpetrators of conflict) during peace negotiations was another hindrance to the effectiveness of peace building. Furthermore, there were no written peace agreements between Luo and Kipsigis during because the elders were illiterate. Consequently, Kipsigis and Luo did not have binding peace agreements (KNA,NC/NN 1952).

Before the advent of colonialism in Kenya, women's voices were never heard during mainstream peace talks between Luo and Kipsigis elders because they were deemed perceive members of society and could not keep secrets (Apiyo, oral interview, July 16th, 2014). Women

were mainly entrusted with household chores, such as baby seating, cooking and washing. Moreover, lack of participation of women in peace building processes was exacerbated by social cultural practices, such as patriarchy and gerontocracy, which led to male domination in key decision-making processes both at family and community levels (Cheruiyot, oral interview, August 4th, 2014). For instance, among the Kipsigis, it was unacceptable for women to sit among elderly men. In addition, women could not address men in public meetings. Similarly, Luo women were relegated to secondary roles in the society (KNA,DC/NN 1/20). Nonetheless, if women had to express their concerns about a given conflict, they met separately and appointed a man to present their views to the elders. Colonialism in Kenya did not ameliorate the status of African women.

2.4 Conflicts and Peace building during the Colonial Period

The advent of colonialism in Kenya in 1900, largely, interfered with the peaceful coexistence between various communities. According to the respondents, the colonial administration in Kenya appointed chiefs, some of them at the higher rank of supreme chiefs. The colonialists used these chiefs and supreme chiefs to alter conventional settlement patterns and land tenure systems. In this process, some families or individuals lost their land and were displaced and shoved to marginalized settlements popularly known as native reserves (Oucho, 2002). The colonial regime created segregation boundaries, which included white highlands, native reserves, outlying districts and closed districts. The Europeans further dominated fertile highlands in Kenya, created some European settlements in boundary areas, in order to balkanize different African groups from one another (KNA,DC/NN 1953). For instance, buffer zones of European settlements were established between the Kipsigis and the Gusii, the Kipsigis and the Nandi and between the Luo and the Kipsigis. These boundaries were imprecisely demarcated,

making boundary issues a perpetual problem among the relevant communities (Porter & Gillian, 2005). This has over the years, created confusion in determining where the accurate boundary between two ethnic communities should be since they both base their claims on credible evidence. Colonial as well as current administrative boundaries in Kenya are different from traditional inter-ethnic/intra-ethnic settlement arrangements (Rotich, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). The subsequent bewilderment has led, for example, to recurrent land disputes along the Sigowet border that demarcates Luo and Kipsigis land. This has led to contested territories, which normally lead to reoccurrence and aggravation of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigi(KNA,DC/NN 8/1/1 1930).

This balkanizing strategy of creating buffer zones was used to weaken the pre-colonial intermingling, which existed among many communities (Okech, oral interview, July 17th, 2014). Worse still, the artificial colonial administrative boundaries distorted kinship networks. The tactic also assisted in reinforcing ethnic awareness among different communities, ended up promoting the feeling of exclusiveness, and eventually planted the seeds of ethnocentrism and the urge of ethnocracy (Rotich, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). Moreover, the British colonists encouraged the identification of people by ethnicity and perfected the policy of divide and rule along ethnic lines. This further encouraged competition and spread of negative propaganda and prejudices among different ethnic groups.

Inter-tribal conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis continued during the colonial period because of the aforementioned issues, such as cattle rustling and struggle to have a share of scarce natural resources (water and pasture). For instance, there was a serious conflict in Sondu in 1934 and 1938 respectively (KNA,DC/NN 3/2-20). The Kipsigis raiding of Luo in the name of taking back their animals triggered these conflicts. Towards the end of colonialism, there was

another serious conflict in 1962. The conflict began at Sondu and spread along the border. Cattle rustling primarily caused this conflict. It was noted that the Kipsigis had continued to steal cows from the Luo despite the stringent measures that had been put in place by the colonial administration to curb cattle theft. Thus, in 1962, Luo organized a retaliatory raid against the Kipsigis. A serious conflict ensued when the Kipsigis attempted to trace their animals in the Luo land (Opar, oral interview, July 17th, 2014).

A 1910 memorandum from the Secretary to the Administration to the Provincial and District Commissioners, emphasised the importance of gathering the wishes of the people (Africans) before recommendations were made to the governor for the selection and appointment of chiefs and headmen. The memorandum further stressed that administrative officers should never lose sight of the fact that if men – and not women – were artificially raised above their fellows, or forced upon the people they were expected to govern, they generally proved unsatisfactory, and in the course of time would have to be deposed, causing the native authority to be entirely undermined (KNA, 1912).

The colonial administrators took various measures to limit intertribal conflicts. From the early days of colonialism, one of the first measures that were undertaken by the colonial authorities was to forbid cattle raiding (Peristiany, 1929). This, however, did not stop cattle raiding during the colonial period. Instead, cattle raiding had a further dimension added to it. This meant that two distinct varieties of cattle raiding existed for the most of the colonial period; traditional cattle raids executed by warriors of the same sub group (Peristiany, 1929). The Kipsigis, for instance, and then, the new variety whereby warriors from different ethnic groups, including non-Kalenjin, such as the Luo and Gusii, all worked together.

Hollis noted that cattle raiding continued after colonization of Kenya. Nonetheless, as the colonial authorities extended their control over the white highlands, large-scale cattle raiding did become an ever-rarer occurrence (Schiling & Opiyo, 2012). This was due to the strict measures put in place by the colonist to deter cattle thieves from raiding their neighbors. For instance, if an individual was found culpable of cattle theft he was punished severely, irrespective of whether the offence had taken place in African farms or European residential areas (Schiling et al., 2012).

Apart from taking punitive measures against cattle thieves, the colonial regime attempted to weaken the culture of cattle raiding by encouraging Africans to participate in European sports. Sports competitions, therefore, were organized at regional and local levels with many Africans taking part as both competitors and spectators. The colonial administration sought to provide a substitute for cattle raiding through sports meetings where warriors could win awards while competing against other warriors (Schiling et al., 2012). An example of the eagerness with which the British tried to put to an end to cattle raids is the following sentence used in the late 1930s as part of the campaign to stop cattle raiding among the Kipsigis: “Show your valor in sports and games, not in war” (Schiling et al., p.15). In other words, European games were used to divert the attention of young warriors from participating in cattle rustling, which the British colonial administrators deemed “a chaotic and dangerous sport” (Schiling et al., 2012, p.16). The two aforementioned strategies were quite effective in curtailing cattle rustling-a major cause of friction between Luo and Kipsigis. Therefore, there was relative peace between the Luo and Kipsigis during the colonial era (Ochieng, oral interview, August 8th, 2014).

The participation of women in peace building remained latent during the colonial period because the authoritative colonial regime only served to reinforce the patriarchal practices that

had hitherto hindered the participation of women in leadership, critical decision-making processes and peace building (Porter & Gillian, 2005).

2.5 Summary

This chapter has traced the migrations and settlement of the Luo and Kipsigis in pre-colonial Kenya. The findings of this study indicate that conflicts between the Luo and Kipsigis began in the pre-colonial period mainly due to cattle rustling. Whenever conflict occurred, both Luo and Kipsigis elders participated in reconciliation activities. However, cultural barriers hindered women from active participation in peace building activities. Conflicts continued during the colonial period, but on a minimal scale because the colonial regime took serious actions against cattle rustlers. The colonial regime failed to empower women; hence, they did not participate actively in conflict resolution activities.

CHAPTER THREE

CAUSES OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE LUO OF UPPER NYAKACH AND THE KIPSIGIS OF SIGOWET AFTER INDEPENDENCE IN 1963.

3.1 Introduction

In the pre-colonial era, Luo and Kipsigis communities coexisted peacefully. For example, they exchanged goods and services at Sondu market, a cosmopolitan area that attracted various communities including Maasai and Gusii communities (Odede, oral interview, August 5th, 2014). Moreover, Luo provided casual labor services to the Kipsigis, especially in their farms. However, the peaceful co-existence between these two communities was often disrupted with sporadic conflicts (Ogwang', oral interview, August 8th, 2014).

3.2 Causes of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis

A cattle raiding remained an important factor in Kalenjin culture in the post-independence period in both the traditional intertribal form and the newer multi ethnic form (Koech, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). Consequently, it remained the primary cause of conflicts in the Sigowet border between Luo and Kipsigis. The reason behind modern-day cattle raids included shortage of cattle due to drought and/ or epidemics (Koech, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). The following factors led to increase in cattle rustling after independence.

First, modern weapons revolutionised cattle raiding. Second, the manner in which cattle rustling activities were after independence changed significantly. For instance, the motives for cattle rustling were transformed from cultural to commercial purposes. Traditionally, cattle were used for paying dowry, conducting rituals and possession of many cattle acted as a measure of wealth (Oyugi, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). After independence, cattle raiding was mainly

conducted for commercial reasons (Oyugi, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). For instance, many youths involved in illegal livestock trade in which cattle raided from the Luo community were auctioned to buyers, mainly butchers, in the rift valley and vice versa.

According to numerous sources, these businesspersons, most of whom owned butcheries, were to blame for the deadly raids (Yego, oral interview, July 15th, 2014). The attacks were painstakingly organized, funded and coordinated. Police reports also indicated that well-coordinated armed gangs executed the attacks with high-level intelligence who knew how the community policing groups operated (Yego, oral interview, July 15th, 2014). The attackers often raided cattle at night and surreptitiously slaughtered them in thickets to conceal evidence. Alternatively, stolen animals could be bundled into trucks and hauled to various urban centers where there were ready markets for meat. Thus, it became very difficult to trace and recover stolen livestock.

Third, cattle theft was further compounded by the prolonged marginalization of the pastoral subsystems, underdevelopment, and a harsh natural environment, which led to desperation that made criminal raids more attractive to the youth. Thus, the youth along the Sigowet border abandoned other economic ventures and primarily focused on cattle raiding as their key source of livelihood (Okoth, oral interview, August 9th, 2014). Raiders also became extremely brutal, targeting unarmed civilians and non-combatants, including women and children. This led to simmering animosity between the two communities and the desire to revenge. Consequently, a cycle of conflict emerged as members of each community tried to subdue the other. According to some accounts, raiders were no longer just interested in animals. Instead, they attacked an entire location, swept livestock and killed people, sometimes in daytime operations that could last up to six hours (Daily Nation Newspaper, 1999).

Fourth, raids generated a separate economy. They became a means of reproducing themselves and enhanced the power of the war barons. For instance, it was noted by some respondents that some local elders and spiritual leaders instructed, trained, and prayed for the raider-warriors before they went raiding (Omolo, oral interview, July 17th, 2014). This enhanced both courage and legitimacy for these warriors. Increasingly guidance and “blessings” were offered at a fee (Bet, oral interview, August 5th, 2014). The seers often worked cahoots with the raiders to share a percentage of successful raid’s bounty. War and the legitimization of cattle raiding led to its commercialization. The traditional beacons of society also exacerbated the conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet (Tum, oral interview, July 20th, 2014).

The power of the seers and raiders was reinforced by their coalition with political leaders. In one case, stolen animals were traced to the home of a powerful Minister. In a statement to the media, an unnamed administrator argued, that the minister had nothing to do with the raid, that the culprits had merely crushed a fence into his homestead without the foggiest idea to which it belonged (Daily Nation Newspaper, 2000). According to this explanation, security forces were hot on the heels of the culprits who stormed into the minister’s stockade in a desperate attempt to escape arrest. The culprits were never arrested, nor were the animals ever recovered. Therefore, a critical factor that accentuated the raids was the protection raiders received from their powerful allies that were close to the administration (Tum, oral interview, July 20th, 2014). Endemic cattle raids, therefore, led to disillusionment of innocent civilians and as hopelessness gripped the people and anger engulfed them, the urge for revenge became the driving motive of conflict. Out of hopelessness, people turned to conflict for survival after experiencing serious destruction of life systems.

Poverty and overdependence on cattle by the Kipsigis, triggered by their general cultural orientation, contributed to cattle rustling which translated to conflict (Tum, oral interview, July 20th, 2014). It is also argued that the Kipsigis ethnic ideology was against the prosperity (economic strength) of their Luo and Gusii neighbours; hence, they frequently raided their cattle to weaken them economically. Local elders from the above-mentioned communities were involved in the tracing process of the stolen animals. However, this never yielded much success to curb cattle rustling.

Some respondents in Sondu pointed out that in the process of tracing their cows, people from the Kipsigis community misled them by telling them that the footprints they were following were those of donkeys (Omondi, oral interview, August 18th, 2014). This not only frustrated the tracing process, but also aggravated ethnic hatred, which led retaliatory raids by members of the Gusii community. Due to poverty, most of the unemployed youths were engaged in acts of violence whenever an opportunity presents itself, especially when politicians and other leaders incited them for their own gains (Onyango, oral interview, August 6th, 2014). Poverty also caused conflict as most people were unable to earn a decent livelihood and resorted to lawlessness to reap from where they did not sow (Onyango, oral interview, August 6th, 2014).

Apart from cattle theft, other causes of conflicts included the following. Inter-and intra-community land disputes were very common because of land scarcity and boundaries that were not so well defined (Oucho, 2002). For instance, the Kipsigis believed that the Luo and Gusii invaded their land and so they had a duty to defend it (Oyugi, 2002). The Gusii and Luo, on the other hand, claimed that they had legally bought or leased the land and should be left to carry out their daily business (Oyugi, 2002). Disputes over land boundaries among the local villagers were

common due to lack of clear demarcations and absence of title deeds. This led to a situation where boundaries were based on mutual agreement between and among residents.

Colonialism and freedom struggles in Kenya left a range of legacies, including discordant and militarized politics and ferocious struggles for authority and land. Both Kenyatta and Moi sustained these dynamics, clinging on power through neo-patrimonial networks, state capture, militarization and intimidation. As such, they encouraged an ideology of “Us versus Them”, excluding and marginalizing other groups. This led to the dominance of access to state structures and resources by people from particular communities, group or political party to the exclusion of others thus exacerbating social divisions (Owuor, 2002). This study found out that elite power struggles and political exclusion has facilitated conflict dynamics between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet (Magut, oral interview, August 5th, 2014).

In Nyanza, political conflicts began in the 1970's, a time when the late Jaramogi Oginga Odinga differed with Kenyatta and formed Kenya Peoples' Union (KPU) with other members of Parliament (Akinyi et al., 2011). This ethno-political hatred sustained into Moi's era. When Moi affirmed the Nyayo philosophy, which translated into continuous political repression, Luo Nyanza was marginalized in a similar fashion, the Kenyatta regime had placed it in terms of government appointments and development programmes (Barasa, 1997). With the recurrence of multiparty politics, most members of the Luo ethnic community rallied behind Oginga Odinga and his FORD-Kenya party (Barasa, 1997). As KANU and Moi won, the 1992 general elections, Luo and 'their' FORD-Kenya party became part of the opposition, reinforcing the traditional thinking that Luo were always in the opposition. Luo detested the Kipsigis who allied with Moi, especially after the mysterious death of Robert Ouko, a popular Foreign Affairs minister in the Moi government. This incident aggravated the Luo-Kalenjin fissures, which already existed due

to the perceived political estrangement, as well as cattle rustling, and land disputes that were experienced along the border. Luo were seen as a big menace to Moi's regime and the animosity between the Luo and Kipsigis was deeply entrenched. This ethno-political animosity partially explains why the Kipsigis are targeted in places like Sondu and Kisumu apart from during the 2007 general election when the Kipsigis united with Luo in the ODM party (Omondi, oral interview, August 18th, 2014).

Unfortunately, between 1975 and 1978, when Moi was the vice president, the Kipsigis constantly raided cattle in Luo land (Ojwang, oral interview, August 9th, 2014). When Moi became president, the anti-stock theft unit was recalled and replaced by the Kenya police. The Kenya police acquired a bad reputation in handling cross border conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis due to corruption, brutality, ineptitude and impartiality. One of the respondents noted that during Moi's tenure conflicts escalated in Sigowet and Upper Nyakach Divisions because the government, through the Kenya police was not committed, if not encouraged the Kipsigis to raid animals from the Luo community (Ojwang, oral interview, August 9th, 2014).

The inter-ethnic hostility of the Moi era reached their acme during the multiparty politics that culminated to the 1992 general election. With the constitutional requirement that the winning presidential candidate needed to obtain at least 25% of the votes in any five of Kenya's eight provinces (considered separately) besides winning the majority of the total votes cast, the Kipsigis (being the Kalenjin front-line community on the Rift Valley/Nyanza border points) never wanted anything to do with Luo and Gusii in Sondu to ensure that Moi's rivals did not meet that electoral requirement in Rift Valley Province (Ojwang, oral interview, August 9th, 2014). This made Sondu (the border trading centre) hot battling grounds where many people died, houses were torched and animals stolen (Chelule, oral interview, July 19th, 2014).

Challenges in the police service also contributed to increase in conflict between Luo and Kipsigis. The police were critical in handling conflicts because they were often the first contact persons with victims and perpetrators in conflict situations. Hence, they were supposed to play a vital role in conflict mitigation. Moreover, their position in the criminal justice system determined the course of the judicial process (Okoth, oral interview, August 9th, 2014). This was the case during Kenyatta's regime. For instance, during the first decade of independence, cattle raids were conducted, but on a minimal scale and were not very violent. Whenever there was cattle theft, leaders from both the Kipsigis and Luo communities compelled cattle thieves to return stolen animals (Okoth, oral interview, August 9th, 2014). After that, they held peace talks to prevent reoccurrence of conflicts. However, due to recurrent cattle rustling and conflicts, the government introduced the anti-stock theft police unit to contain cattle rustling between Luo and Kipsigis (Magut, oral interview, July 18th, 2014). The anti-stock theft managed to curb cattle rustling by arresting and punishing those culpable of cattle theft. In addition, they were very effective in tracing and taking back stolen cattle to their rightful owners. In addition, they summoned the Luo and Kipsigis to attend peace talks. The provincial administration was also effective in managing conflicts. For example, they helped in tracing stolen animals and punished cattle raiders. Therefore, the anti-stocks theft police officers and the provincial administration managed to limit cattle raids during the first decade of independence (Magut, oral interview, August 9th, 2014).

According to some respondents in Sondu, during cattle rustling and political conflict, the government often favoured the Kipsigis community. This was attributed to the fact that the Kipsigis were part of the politically powerful Kalenjin Community, having been in power for over two decades, and most of the police officers during the Moi regime were Kalenjin, many of

them specifically Kipsigis (Misik, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). The police officers protected the Kipsigis, usually even conversing in their mother tongue with community members and among themselves. For instance, whenever there was a raid on Luo, the police were instructed by powerful Rift valley politicians not to cross the border into the Kipsigis land to investigate the matter. Alternatively, the police would be sent very late, usually when many Luo and Gusii were already injured or killed (Apiyo, oral interview, July 16th, 2014). This motivated them to continue with the culture of cattle rustling and conflicts. Gusii have echoed such sentiments by members of the Luo community in Sondu. The biased handling of cross border conflicts by the provincial administration, especially the Kenya police, therefore, encouraged retaliatory attacks; hence, leading to perennial conflicts (Maguti, oral interview, July 16th, 2014). Thus, lack of proper handling of cross border conflicts, especially in the 1980s led to simmering tensions, which culminated to the 1992 ethnic clashes that gripped the entire Rift Valley province and led to serious chaos between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

The government security machinery, according to some of the respondents, also had a hand in the business of cattle rustling. By colluding with the cattle rustlers, they deliberately failed to trace stolen animals so that they could get a share of the cattle theft bounty from the rustlers. This aspect of criminal activity and corruption aggravated the phenomenon of cattle rustling which in turn resulted into conflict (Otieno, oral interview, July 16th, 2014). Therefore, by being part of the intricate cattle-rustling scheme, the government security machinery contributed to inter-ethnic conflict between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

Information gathered in Sondu revealed that Kipsigis politicians often donated some of the sophisticated weapons used in the raids (Misik, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). For instance, some informants reported that during the tribal clashes in 1992, go downs at Sondu

market were fully stocked with weapons (machetes, bows and arrows). It was reported that then prominent political leaders in the Moi regime, supplied these weapons to the Kipsigis warriors. Thus, underlying this claim was the reality of patron-client relationships that political leaders maintained with their electoral blocs in order to attain and uphold power (Misik, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). These networks of patronage took the form of political leaders' efforts to secure national or local positions for their supporters, and securing other valued resources for their constituents (Rotich, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). Hence, the struggle over resource allocation and distribution often took parochial forms of over-emphasizing the rights of one's community to the exclusion of others. Intra-ethnic dynamics existed too in the form of manipulation of clan or sub-locality identities to maximize on the votes a politician could garner. Ethnicity was therefore at the centre of politics (Omondi, oral interview, August 18th, 2014).

In 1992, there was a serious conflict and cattle rustling and political difference between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet majorly caused it. Politically, the leadership of the then president Moi disillusioned the Luo and this made them dislike the Kipsigis. The raiding of the Luo cattle by the Kipsigis on a market day and in their homesteads triggered this conflict. During the conflict, many Luo men were killed and some of them were drowned in River Sondu (Byengo, oral interview, July 14th, 2014). In October and September 1992, the conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet took a political twist on the eve of the multiparty elections. During the border conflicts, the police became biased in quelling the violence by favouring the Kipsigis against the Luo (Odede, oral interview, July 17th, 2014). For example, when Kalenjins attacked, killed Luo and torched their homes, the police restrained them from retaliating (Odede, oral interview, July 17th, 2014). The Kipsigis in Sondu area attacked their neighbours, the Luo, with modern weapons, unlike spears and arrows which

characterized skirmishes triggered by livestock thefts during the pre-colonial period. As the Kipsigis gunfire gripped the area, the Luo responded by using arrows and sophisticated slings (*orujre* in DhoLuo), which directed stones at least three trajectories (Omolo, oral interview, July 7th, 2014). It was during this time that Luo women decided to contribute to the conflict by cooking for their warriors and providing them with necessary war-logistics, such as stones.

3.3 Impact of Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Border Conflict on Women

The 1992 conflict was so serious that it was not only about cattle rustling but land issues were involved. Kipsigis pushed Luo towards the lake claiming that the Luo belonged to fishing and not agricultural communities.

In this area, there has been no relocation of the IDPs (exclusively the Luo) temporarily held at Thessalia Mission. Although it appeared that the problem would be resolved through Moi-Oginga co-operation, it persisted after Jaramogi Oginga Odinga died in January 1994. The displaced persons had never returned by mid-2001. On the eve of the 1992 general elections, there was chaos triggered by political difference between the two tribes (Rotich, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). Therefore, politics has also influenced these conflicts. Political leaders used violence to intimidate their opponents and to warn them against the potential consequences of voting in undesired pattern.

The findings of this study indicate that members of Luo and Kipsigis communities are usually affected by recurrent border conflicts in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet. While entire communities suffer the consequences of conflict, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex (Akinyi et al., 2011). Indeed, available statistics indicate that approximately 80% of civilian casualties in armed conflicts are women and that 80% of all refugees and internally displaced people worldwide are women and children (Koech,

oral interview, July 10th, 2014). Moreover, women find themselves in a serious situation: while they are the main civilian victims of conflicts, they are often powerless to prevent them, are often excluded from negotiations when it comes to their resolutions and confined to a marginal role in the post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation efforts. This section briefly discusses the major impacts of border clashes between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet on women.

During border conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet, affected women usually struggle to support their families and keep their households together while the traditional bread-winners – husbands and sons – are caught up in the fighting and are unable to provide for their families (Koech, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). The new role as primary provider exposes many women to further abuse. Ethnic conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis shatter the comfort of predictable daily routines and livelihood activities of women (Murgor, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). According to Kimutai, in cases where husbands were killed or missing, women faced tremendous difficulties in maintaining their families. Besides losing the breadwinner, the workload for women increased substantially as the displaced men and youth, fled, migrated from the villages, were killed or joined combatants (Odhiambo, oral interview, August 5th, 2014). In addition to the tasks they had to perform traditionally, women now had to attend to two gender roles. They had to not only performed their part of the work, but also had to do what men were supposed to do. For instance, they had to plough the land and prepare for planting; they had to fix and change roofing, as well as deal with economic management too.

Rape and violence against women was reported as one of the major effects of border conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet. According to Cheruiyot, a

respondent from Sigowet, many women in Sondu area experienced sexual violence during the 1992 ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley. Most of the women respondents from upper Nyakach also highlighted sexual violence against women as one of the serious outcomes of ethnic clashes between Luo and Kipsigis. Anyango who witnessed the 1992 ethnic clashes noted that:

During the tribal clashes in 1992, Sondu market became a hot sport of ethnic conflict due to its cosmopolitan nature. As the conflict ensued, men increasingly went to the battlegrounds to defend their communities against attacks. Thus, many women were left behind to care for children. Unfortunately, as the conflict intensified, women and young girls became “soft targets” for revenge attacks. Sexual harassment was extensive in scope and magnitude throughout the hot spot areas, especially in Sondu market. For example, my young daughter was forced into early marriage after conceiving as a result of rape incidence. Worse still, some of the women who were raped during the conflict contracted HIV/AIDS and were abandoned by their spouses (Anyango, oral interview, August 5th, 2014).

Whenever there is conflict between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women from both communities always experience serious psychological challenges; Trauma in women often manifests itself in depression, chronic fatigue, stress, anguish and listlessness (MYWO, 2011). Women respondents from both communities cited psychological problems as a common challenge that lingers in women who have been directly affected by the border conflicts. Atieno, a respondent from Upper Nyakach, noted that:

My life was shattered completely when my home was attacked and razed down by Kipsigis cattle thieves who stole all my cattle in December 1991. I sought refuge in a neighboring village with my children. After three months I relocated to Sondu market, where I lived in a one roomed house with five members of my family. I then started a small green grocery business, which enabled me to bounce back to economic stability. However, my psychological trauma worsened in December 1992 when I was caught up in another serious ethnic clash. These times, the worst happened I lost my last born son who went missing when we scampered for safety during one of the vicious attacks (Atieno, oral interview, August 15th, 2014).

Some respondents highlighted unreported deaths of their loved ones, some who were never given a decent burial. For example, Magut who lost his two sons during one of the border

conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet in 1989 noted that today he is still suffering from serious trauma.

During the ethnic conflicts, most schools located along the border of Upper Nyakach, Sigowet border are often affected and closed, and some others destroyed. Many children are therefore forced to stay at home due to security concerns, teachers are forced to flee or families are trans-located to areas without education facilities (Atieno, oral interview, August 15th, 2014). In extreme cases, children have been forced to become combatants or participate in the activities of the combatants as Warriors (Ochieng, oral interview, August 8th, 2014). Majority at this point have few options other than working as farm laborers and migrant workers. This has affected the education of children in major ways in both terms of access and reintegration on education. Obviously, girls are hard hit since they are often among the first casualties (Atieno, oral interview, August 15th, 2014).

3.4 Summary

This chapter has revealed that Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties have been prone to violence since the pre-colonial period. The findings reveal that a cattle rustling over the years has been the main cause of conflict between Kipsigis of Sigowet and Luo of Upper Nyakach. Other causes of conflicts include cattle theft (commercialization of cattle rustling), political differences, historical border disputes, and competition over natural resources, such as pastureland and water. It has been difficult to foster long-term peace between these two communities, especially in the post-independence period because a myriad of factors have contributed to conflicts between them. Moreover, the failure of various government institutions to deal with cattle theft properly has led to increase in conflict in the post-independence period.

The next chapter discusses the participation of women in peace building and reconciliation between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN PEACE BUILDING EFFORTS AMONG THE LUO OF UPPER NYAKACH AND KIPSIGIS OF SIGOWET SUB-COUNTIES 1963-1992

4.1 Introduction

In spite of the general marginalization of Kenyan women in general and Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet in particular in the political sphere, women used other vehicles to articulate their issues. Women's mobilization for collective action to address their issues is a political and therefore an empowering process. A positive trend observed in this regard is the proliferation of women's organization which improved in quality and quantity during the period of study. Just as oppressed and discriminated workers organized various collective initiatives to fight their oppression by the capitalist owners, women over the world developed strategies to counter the gender based oppression and discrimination which they had been victims of since the colonial era(Baines,2005). Women groups evolved and grew as one of the instruments to fight against social, economic and political inequalities and marginalization. However, at the same time there were a few Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women who broke the structural barriers to become participants in peace negotiations.

The women groups' movements as mentioned earlier traced their roots back to the traditional society. The women were engaged in joint agricultural labor, social welfare activities, recreation and entertainment. In the 1950s the colonial state initiated Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) that co-existed with the traditional based women groups. The MYWO was a colonial reflection of the view that women should contribute to improving the welfare and well-being of the family. It was like a women's club, with primarily emphasis on domestic crafts

such as embroidery, and improving the family diet especially for the children. The post independent period saw many women take part in various development activities that made them become self-reliance. This chapter, therefore, discusses the participation of women in peace building in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Border. It begins by discussing the key effects of cross border conflicts on women, with an aim of highlighting the need of women to participate in peace building. The second section discusses conventional ethnic conflict resolution mechanisms and the last part describes the participation of women in peace building between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

4.2 Peace Building between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of of Sigowet.

In the post-independence period, various initiatives have been put in place to solve disputes between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet and they include the following. First, traditional peace resolution mechanisms have been upheld in the post-independence period (MYWO, 2011). The council of elders from both Kipsigis and Luo communities has continued to intervene in various conflicts that have occurred in the post-independence period. Most of the respondents noted that the elders have been effective in resolving disputes and conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet (Mwagiru, 1998). However, the emergence of various peace actors in the post-independence period, as noted by some informants, has eroded the importance of traditional justice systems (Akumu, oral interview, August 8th, 2014). Moreover, some informants noted that some elders were responsible for the occurrence of the conflicts by blessing and motivating cattle thieves in order to get a share of the cattle raiding bounty (Omondi, oral interview, May 18th, 2014).

Apart from the traditional peace resolution mechanisms, the post-independence era has witnessed the participation of various government institutions. Government responses can be

clustered into judicial and administrative interventions. In terms of administrative response, the provincial administration has been assisting in restoration of peace and apprehending perpetrators of violence. However, the effectiveness of the provincial administration in resolving conflicts between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet has been affected by biasness, corruption and favouritism as already mentioned (Omondi, oral interview, September 8th, 2014). For instance, the respondents noted that in the past, some members of the provincial administration at the grass root level, such as chiefs and district officers were not committed in restoring peace since they benefited directly or indirectly from cattle rustling and violence. The judiciary has helped in curbing conflicts by taking punitive measures against those found guilty of perpetrating inter-tribal conflicts and cattle rustling.

Religious bodies have also been involved in peaceful intervention whenever serious conflicts occur between various communities. Although churches are not supposed to engage in political matters directly, they have been compelled by conflict situations to restore peace. For instance, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) has been in the vanguard in peace building between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet. This organization has organized and funded various peace-building activities, which include, but are not limited to sports, peace workshops and peace exhibitions. It has also participated in post conflict reconstruction by offering guidance and counselling services and material support to war victims (Rutto, 2000).

Political leaders from both Luo and Kipsigis communities have also participated peace-building activities (Rutto, 2000). However, the same politicians, according to most the respondents, were some of the masterminds behind inter-ethnic conflicts. Politicians have been blamed for incitement; funding and coordination of inter-ethnic conflicts (Githaiga, 2010). For

instance, it was noted that during the 1992 tribal clashes, politicians that were allied to the government supported the conflict, but those in the opposition openly condemned the violence and advocated peaceful reconciliation instead of retaliatory attacks. Therefore, the politicians seem to have double standards in conflict and peace building.

The local and international mass media have also contributed to peace building by bringing to the limelight the causes of conflicts and peace building activities (Akinyi et al., 2011). The post-independence period in Kenya has witnessed a tremendous growth in mass media. This has enabled Kenyans to access a lot of information. Moreover, the mass media has created a platform in which people share their views about conflict and peace building. However, the government dominated the media especially during Moi's tenure; hence, it earned a bad reputation for playing politics and misleading the masses by giving false information and biased accounts of the causes of inter-ethnic conflicts.

A part from the aforementioned peace building mechanisms Luo and Kipsigis usually solve their disputes through traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (Aoko, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). Whenever, inter-tribal conflicts occur, they are solved amicably by the council of elders. Indeed, the institution of elders is greatly respected (Magut, oral interview, August 5th, 2014). Elders are seen as dependable and well-informed individuals in the community matters. This enables them to make informed and rational decisions in matters related to peace building and reconciliation. Luo and Kipsigis leaders organize conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives. Peace talks are often held at designated places along the Upper Nyakach-Sigowet border. The process of peace building is quite elaborate and follows various procedures. First, elders of each community hold separate meetings before organizing an intertribal peace meeting. This enables them to identify the causes of and solutions to a given conflict. After that, leaders

from both Luo and Kipsigis communities convene a joint peace meeting to solve a given dispute (Magut, oral interview, August 5th, 2014). During conflict resolution, emphasis is placed on understanding the causes of a given conflict. During such meetings, livestock theft, according to one of the informants, is often cited as the primary cause of conflicts (Magut, oral interview, July 18th, 2014). Inter-tribal peace talks have been quite effective in resolving disputes, but they do not offer lasting solutions to conflict because perennial animal thefts lead to recurrent conflicts (Ochieng, oral interview, August 8th, 2014). The side lining of the youth (key perpetrators of conflict) during peace negotiations has been another hindrance to the effectiveness of peace building.

4.3 The Role of Women in Peace Building between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet.

Women play important roles in the process of peace building, first as activists and advocates for peace, women wage conflict non-violently by pursuing democracy and human rights. Secondly, as peacekeepers and relief aid workers, women contribute to reducing direct violence. Thirdly, as mediators, trauma healing counselors, and policymakers, women work to ‘transform relationships’ and address the root of violence. Lastly, as educators and participants in the development process, women contribute to building the capacity of their communities and nations to prevent violent conflict. This is made possible as a result of socialization processes and the historical experience of unequal relations and values that women bring to the process of peace building (Akumu, oral interview, August 8th, 2014).

4.3.1 Participation of Women in Peace Building since Independence

In the post-independence period, the participation of women in peace building has increased dramatically due to a number of reasons. Since independence, women have had more

opportunity to participate in peace building processes because discriminatory cultural practices that hindered their participation in peace processes have faded. Samora (2011) posits that the growth of feminist movement in South Nyanza gained great momentum in 1967. At first, women were more concerned with inequalities in laws, culture and their role in the society. The argument proceeds to show that Luo women become even more vibrant from the 1980s, demanding participation in equal measure with men in the society. The quest for women's rights spread not only in South Nyanza but also in Kenya. Among the agendas sought after by the women were their participation in governance and leadership, moreover, many women have attained higher education. This has enabled them to ascend to high decision-making bodies and to participate in peace building activities (MYWO, 2011). By January 1967, a number of border committees – comprising both men and women – were also up and running. For example, on 7th January 1967, the Nyangusu Border Committee was able to address some major peace concerns in the area (KNA, 1967). Today, many women occupy various positions in the provincial administration. For example, the current Sub-County Officer in Sigowet is a woman. Some women are also serving as chiefs. This has enabled them to participate in peace building initiatives.

Post 1992 tribal clashes led to the emergence of a number of responses to issues of conflicts, such as women peace ambassadors in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-County. They usually convene intertribal peace meetings quarterly to discuss peace-building activities, such as joint ventures between the communities. These activities have fostered unity among the communities. However, they always organize crisis peace meetings, whenever a serious conflict occurs. Women peace ambassadors have initiated and are currently implementing various peace-building initiatives, women traders from Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet formed

a CBO called KALUO (Kalenjin/Luo) Women Group which apart from economic benefits, partnered with the Catholic missionaries and built an orphanage which took care of orphans from both sides in areas of school fee payment, clothing and feeding. They did follow-ups and offered assistance to vulnerable groups like the old, sick and widows/widowers. This was confirmed by Mzee Kiptoo(a widower):

Myself I gave birth to two daughters and four sons. My wife was killed when she went to sell charcoal in Sondu Market; she disagreed with a Luo buyer who raised an alarm that she stole her money. My two sons, who went for revenge mission, were also killed. The other two sons and their wives died of HIV/AIDS. They left behind nine children. As you can see I am 82 years old and cannot feed these nine mouths, plus mine. When these people (KALUO) came, they took for me five grandchildren, they have also built a house for me, bought clothes and they are the ones giving me food. This is why I am still breathing (Kiptoo, oral interview, August 7th, 2014).

Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet women at the grassroots level held village peace exhibitions where they exchanged views on the symbols of peace and examined security situations in the areas they visited during the clashes and after. According to one key informant, during the village peace exhibitions, people came along with peace regalia from different communities because it was believed that what might seem ordinary to one community might convey a very different thing to another community (Anyango, oral interview, August 9th, 2014). During the peace exhibition, women sang traditional peace songs, brought milk, gourds, spears, arrows, grass, babies, green leaves and explained how they were used during war. For example, the Kipsigis women carried milk in a gourd and green grass or leaves during war as a symbol that they were seeking peace.

On the other hand, Luo women made a temporary structure of tree branches along the border and warriors mounted their weapons over it (Misik, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). A dog would then be slaughtered and slashed in half and its blood interspersed along the border. Lactating women would swap babies with the opponent and suckle them. The warriors would

also swap over spears with their adversaries. The elders then conducted prayers and a deep curse were pronounced to cause mayhem to either side if the peace was sullied (Murgor, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). In addition, women from both communities carried along with them what they considered to be of use in terms of food, especially vegetables, and taught other women how to cook them. This was intended at assisting women from other communities learn to embrace other people's civilisation in so doing dispelling enmity among them.

Cursing is a potent instrument that women employ to ensure that their children comply with their instructions (Murgor, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). In most of the border conflicts between Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet this was one of the strategies women applied to prevent their children from going to battle. A son should not join the warriors on the raid by this curse. He had to elucidate to the warriors that his mother cursed him and therefore he could not go raiding (Murgor, oral interview, August 7th, 2014). A key informant in Sigowet noted that she threatened to curse her children during the tribal clashes of 1992 in the event that they wished to link the warriors and bring any robbed property into her home (Emmy, oral interview, August 4th, 2014). Consequently, her sons never joined the warriors in the battlefield during the ethnic clashes.

As already observed, women peace builders at the grassroots level encouraged inter-marriages as a way of exchanging inter-tribal cultural practices aimed at ensuring that peace prevailed and there was no misunderstanding between them. Luo of Upper and Kipsigis of Sigowet women continued to work for peace and picking-up pieces from the wars started by men. Among the strategies most women found efficient in promoting peace was through inter-marriage: an old strategy of marrying-off the daughters of one village to the sons of the next was a war-avoidance strategy. During the study, it emerged that inter-marriages between the two

communities did take place. Some of the respondents were of the view that this was one of the ways women used to restore harmony.

My grandmother known as Ajwang, daughter of Oguta, was married off to Jolang'o called Lagat as a fourth wife. Given that the chief was so cruel that whenever he coughed the whole village will go down on their knees. No Kalenjin man could dare steal cows from Kobong' village where the chief had married (Ojwang', oral interview, July 9th, 2014).

Women were ready to pay the price for going against the wishes of their husbands for the sake of peace. They (women) become increasingly active in operational prevention – short term, targeted mechanisms to contain or reverse escalation during a crisis – and particularly in early warning and response efforts. Some women deliberately denied their husbands conjugal rights in a deliberate attempt to keep their latter off the battlefield. The study noted that most husbands did not take kindly this action, women managed to make their point and as a matter of fact, most Luo men withdrew from the conflicts with their Kipsigis nemesis. According to Akoth (who was 35 years at the time of war in 1992):

My husband Omolo had been out for war for two months, when he came back one evening, I was very happy because I had been missing him. But, after eating supper that evening, he said that he would return to fight for his people the following day. So I told him that he was not going to sleep with me unless he accepted not to go to war. Since he was thirsty for me, he had no alternative but to do as I said (Akoth, oral interview, 12th July, 2014).

With the assistance of the Catholic Peace and Justice Commission, women introduced sporting activities as a way of building relationships among the youths from Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet. For example, according to women respondents, Upper Nyakach Rural Women Peace Network organized ball games in the post 1992 ethnic clashes to promote unity (Omondi, oral interview, September 8th, 2014). After the sports competitions a workshop dubbed 'Youth forum' was convened as a follow-up to talk about and examine the

conflict state of affairs and allocated the youth's various roles. During the workshop, both Luo of Upper Nyakach and Kipsigis of Sigowet participants reached a compromise on how to mitigate the occurrence of conflicts (Mwei, oral interview, July 12th, 2014). They vowed to examine sensitive issues that may generate conflict between them, and to report perpetrators of conflicts to the provincial administration (chiefs, District Officers among other) to take immediate action. Women also acted as witnesses in traditional and formal judicial courts. For instance, in villages where land disputes were prevalent and often caused conflicts, women have their testimonies about those behind cattle rustling and land disputes.

With assistance from SDA pastors, SDA Women Ministries, from both sides occasionally organised crusades once or twice a year at the border where pastors from both sides are invited. They invite people from nearby homes (Luo and Kipsigis). The preachers used mother-tongue to pass their messages of peace and salvation. The saved from such gatherings confirmed this:

Me, I used to lead cattle thieves from Kalenjins' side to Luo homes. I could direct them to a home with many cattle and escort them with the stolen cattle upto the border because they did not know the panya (un-official) routes to follow. I had been stealing for the last twelve years, so when I met Jesus at the crusade that was held at Sondu Market in 1992, my life changed and I left stealing. Nowadays I steal Jesus and not cattle (Otieno, oral interview, July 16th, 2014).

Grassroots women peacemakers adopted a 'merry-go-round' approach to aid the victims of the 1992 Rift Valley ethnic clashes (Akoth, oral interview, July 12th, 2014). According to this plan, women met either weekly or monthly to donate cash or any other item of their preference to one of their members. This was done on a rotational basis, depending on who selected the first number (Akoth, oral interview, July 12th, 2014). During such meetings, women prayed, preached peace and contributed in the form of cash, clothes, and household items, among other things. In the process, they counselled their members and encouraged them to stop thinking about the past and build the future.

During and after 1992 tribal clashes various women groups were formed to foster peace. They carried out cohesion visits during and after tribal clashes. For example, Rural Women Peace Link was formed in 1992 as part of the National Council of Churches of Kenya Project. The aim was to form a platform for women to take part in peace building in various communities affected by the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes. They engaged in integration of the warring tribes such as the Kipsigis and Luo through traditional peace-building mechanisms and exchange programmes(Tum, oral interview, July 18th, 2014). Rural Women Peace link during the clashes visited Upper Nyakach and Sigowet and donated food to the victims. They also exchanged peace messages with their counterparts. During the visits, the Rural Peace Link prepared the ground and invited youths, elders and fellow women from Upper Nyakach and Sigowet prepared to attend. After the visits, issues linked to peace were documented during the discussion and were left with the members of the provincial administration to take action. After sometime, they came back to monitor the progress and get feedback. The messages of peace they disseminated included advising parents to discourage their children not to be misused by politicians for their selfish. They challenged parents to encourage their children to engage in meaningful livelihood activities instead of participating in cattle rustling-a major cause of inter-ethnic conflicts.

Women from both sides formed groups and organised a get-together party at Sondu Market; which was a cosmopolitan town. The party was done during the month of December. They prepared dishes from both Luo and Kipsigis traditions. During such celebrations, people ate from the same plates. As tradition dictated and warned, individuals who shared meals from the same plate should not fight and that if one fought, then God will punish one with a very serious sickness leading to death. This was confirmed by Mzee Koech (75 years old):

In the 12th month of 1992, after the war between Luo and Kalenjin, our women organised a get-together party at Sondu Market in a local hotel. They prepared mursik (traditionally

fermented milk), goat meat, fish and traditional vegetables. People ate from the same dishes and took an oath never to attack one another or start a war. My brother Chepchumba died mysteriously after stealing a cow from the homestead of a Luo man they had shared a meal (Koech, oral interview, July 10th, 2014).

It is important to note that among the very many Jobilo (medicine men) there were women, who commanded respect in the Luo society. These women influenced the society by discouraging people from engaging in wars. A famous Luo musician, the late D. O. Misiani, recalled how the efforts of one Isabella Nyar Asego helped to create a lasting peace between the Luo, Abagusii and the Abasuba:

Janawi ma dhako Isabella ma nyarAsegokitiotamojing'eyo
Isabellanego to chiero, ginoneneRuothochano chon (Isabella, a female diviner, people cannot comprehend your character. You can kill and bring back life, something God had planned long time ago)

According to Jaduong' (elder) EllyNg'uru, a retired teacher and librarian, the contribution of Isabella NyarAsego in inter-ethnic peace building in South Nyanza requires more than just a mention. To him, as early as 1904, Isabella was able to keep the Luo men from engaging into violent conflict with their neighbors Abagusii in the Rongo region. Through her gagi (incarnations), she managed to foresee any impending dangers that would result from Luo-Abagusii confrontation and consequently warn the Luo men against taking up arms to fight their neighbors (Odinga, 1974).

In pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial South Nyanza, the homestead (*dala*) was headed by a married man, who was known as *WuonDala*. But in cases where the husband (*wuondala*) died, then a close kinsman (*Jater*) was supposed to inherit the widow, even though the homestead still belonged to the deceased including the children he (*jater*) produced with the widow. The post-independence Luo woman took advantage of this culture of wife inheritance to

intentionally seek inheriter (jater) from the Kalenjin side for purpose of peace. Odede, who lost his younger brother in tribal clashes between the Luo and the Kipsigis, explained:

When my brother died in the fight that broke-out in 1992, my sister-in-law convinced a Kalenjin man (jater) to inherit her fearing more attacks and deaths from the Kipsigis people. I got angry and called a Clan (*anyuola*) meeting who threatened to chase her, but she refused and insisted on staying with the Kipsigisinheriter (jater). They are still staying together up to now and our village has not been attacked since he speaks to them (Kipsigis warriors) in mother-tongue and they leave us safe (Odede, oral interview, August 5th, 2014).

4.4 Challenges Luo and Kipsigis Women Face in Peace Building

4.4.1 Introduction

This study has revealed that the following social, economic and political challenges impede the participation of women in peace building and reconciliation. During data collection, women respondents cited financial constraints as one of the key hindrances to their participation in peace building activities. For instance, due to inadequate funds women peace builders experienced logistical constraints. Hence, it was difficult for them to organize peace seminars. Moreover, they found it quite challenging to implement peace related projects that required financial resources (Tum, oral interview, July 18th, 2014). In some instances, they were not capable of getting access to the media network to enhance their peace campaign because they did not have funds. Thus, women peace builders mainly served on a voluntary basis at the grassroots level. This challenge was linked to poor transportation networks in rural areas and lack of vehicles. Hence, it was difficult for women to access areas prone to conflicts. Consequently, it takes a lot of time for conflicts to be resolved because of geographical barriers. This challenge was hindered security officers from accessing conflict zones (Too, oral interview, July 11th, 2014).

4.4.2 Cultural Issues

Since both Luo and Kipsigis practice strict cultural beliefs, which impede women from participating in the public domain, women found it very hard to contribute to peace building. For instance, among the Kipsigis women were regarded as children and were not allowed to address men in public gatherings (Porter & Gillian, 2005). Even at present, some men are still suspicious of women who actively participate in peace building because they think that such women are attempting to challenge them by doing a job, which, according to them, exclusively falls within their domain. Some women were reluctant to participate in peace building because out of fear that they could be divorced for violating cultural practices that forbid them from participating in key decision-making processes (Porter & Gillian, 2005). Therefore, socio-cultural stereotypes of women as victims and uncritical advocates for peace, combined with a strict division of labour in the public and private spheres, prevent women from entering official peace processes.

4.4.3 Low Participation of Women in Politics

Limited participation of women in politics also hindered them from contributing to peace talks. This is because peace building, to some extent, is a political activity, which requires proper understanding of the nexus between politics, conflict and peace. The poor participation of women in politics, therefore, hinders them from participating in peace building (Aoko, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). In addition, inadequate experience in negotiation, advocacy and lobbying has hindered many women from participating properly in politics and critical decision-making processes. Consequently, in many situations, they are unable to articulate a political platform for action and harness a peace building process.

Women's contribution in the political sphere is not sustainable. Representation does not necessarily mean significant and recognized contribution that has an effect on considerable

inputs in peace accords (Hendricks, 2011). Furthermore, women lose their gains and space when the peace process ends. This makes it very complicated for them to go back to the public domain, when the rebuilding commence. “The strategies of expression women use-poems, marches, plays, prayers, peaceful demonstrations, intercepting delegates in corridors, etc. - are confined to a marginalized feminine realm, without a strong political strategy” (Spadacini, 2010, p.123). Although some of these means of expression can be acknowledged and appreciated for their reference to a more peaceful approach to conflict resolution, they have no impact in long-term strategies for securing a seat at formal and official peace negotiations.

4.4.4 Lack of Visibility of Women in Peace building Activities

Lack of visibility was also cited a key hindrance to women’s participation in peace building .Women’s conflict-resolution activities are restricted to the unofficial sector, very often at the margin of bureaucratic peace negotiations (Oyugi, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). Moreover, even if women participate in promotion of peace, they are not called later on, when informal discussions start (or they are informed at a short notice and have neither the resources to participate nor the time to find new sources of funding).

4.4.5 Inefficiency of District Peace Committees (DPCs),

District Peace Committees (DPCs), created largely to deal with local-level tensions in pastoralist areas, are generally not present in the areas of violence and where they do exist, are overwhelmed by the scale of the challenge they face. However, there are opportunities given the greater domestic and international recognition of the risks of conflict in Kenya to create much more robust national peace building architecture. Some respondent felt no local or traditional methods were used to respond to the said conflicts, e.g. the post-election violence which did not have elders as actors.

4.4.6 Discrimination against Women in Peace building

Gender discrimination in employment and promotion is another obstacle to women's active participation in peace building. The findings of this study revealed that although women served as peace builders at the local level, they were seriously underrepresented in peace making processes. In the first three decades of independence, only a handful of women ascended to senior political and administrative positions. This meant that whenever there was serious conflict women found it difficult to express their views in high decision-making bodies such as parliament and the executive (Baines, 2005). The low representation of women in peace building bodies, as pointed out by many studies, stems from gender insensitivity in hiring, deployment and promotion. The male dominated government has always hindered women from accessing senior leadership roles. For instance, very few women, if not any participated in government security committees in prior to 1992. This was the case because the government either erroneously or deliberately failed to recognize the potential power of including women in peace building, making it a preserve for men.

4.4.7 Limited Access to Education Opportunities

Sex preference in education also hinders many women from ascending to high levels of decision-making (Aoko, oral interview, July 10th, 2014). Many women peace-builders at grassroots level are no well-educated. This affects their ability to participate in peace workshops because organizations that organize peace seminars mainly target experts in the domain of conflict and peace and those who have done extensive research in the same (Omondi, oral interview, September 8th, 2014). This mechanically locks out rural women from participating in peace building because of their low literacy levels since their parents discriminate against in terms of education probably them.

4.4.8 Lack of Economic Empowerment of Women

Women's participation in decision-making, peace building is tied to women's economic and social status. Economic dependency on men means that men are able to decide what women can do or cannot do with their lives, including whether they can or cannot participate in formal and even informal decision-making. Therefore, for women to become part of decision-making there has to be an improvement in their status through review of relevant legislation and other social interventions. Crucially, interventions have to focus on women's participation in the economy and ensure that they do not continue to participate mainly from the fringes of society.

4.4.9 Summary

This chapter has discussed impact of conflict on women and their participation in peace building. The experience of men and women in situations of tension, war and post-conflict reconstruction is markedly different. Research findings of this study indicate that conflict has exacted an excessively high toll on women and other vulnerable groups comprising children, youth and people with disabilities. Women are victims of unbelievably cruel atrocities and injustices in conflict situations. As refugees, internally displaced persons, combatants, heads of household and community leaders, as activists and peace builders, women and men experience conflict very differently.

According to the findings of this study, women are not only victims of conflict, but they are also drivers of peace. Therefore, the participation of women in peace building is crucial if peace is to last. The participation of women in peace building between Luo and Kipsigis has increased gradually since independence. Women add value to peace building because they apply multifaceted approaches in conflict management. Women, however, still face some challenges in peace building, which are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the discussion of results in summary and conclusion of the study. Recommendations for further research is also provided.

5.2 Summary

The aim of this study was to assess and analyse the roles of women in peace building in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties between 1963 and 1992. The study looked into the period 1895 to 1963 as a baseline for examining not only the position of the Kipsigis and Luo women in the colonial and post-colonial Upper Nyakach and Sigowet sub-counties. But also, the period (1895-1963) was useful in providing insights into the conflict that had started even much earlier. Various scholars have mentioned this conflict, and also brought into record the causes and effects on the residents of the cross border area. This study confirmed that indeed the migration and settlement of the Kipsigis and the Luo in the area brought with it various challenges which were attributed to the conflict. The changing land pattern was realised as a major cause of the conflict, since the two communities were and still are pastoralists and semi-cultivators. With pasture and water being a major activator of conflict, the unending tension in the border is witnessed up to now.

This analysis was to effectively provide a background to understanding the history of women participation in peace building, the various strategies employed to promote and maintain peaceful co-existence in the region and the various challenges the Luo-Kipsigis women faced in the process. As the study demonstrated the analysis of the history of women's participation in conflict resolution during the colonial and post-colonial periods was multi-faceted.

The presumptions of the study as guided by conflict theory was analysed vis-à-vis the outcomes realised. Interaction, this was the major cause of conflict, as earlier proposed. The inter-ethnic interaction between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet resulted to a protracted war between the two communities. Women were at the centre of the conflict as both victims and perpetrators. The study majorly analysed women as victims of conflict. For instance, it was established that after the confrontations between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet women fled to the neighbouring respective clans for shelter, food and settlement until ceasefire was reached, albeit temporarily.

As conflict theory assumes, the continued structural inequality among the genders in the communities, was a major cause of war. The study realised that apart from the traditional root causes of war between the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet of Land and competition for scarce resources of water and pasture, women were also triggers of war. For instance, women were sometimes raising false alarms to spark war, a good example was when women falsely claimed being victims of rape so that the men waged war on the other community. Structural inequality among the men in the same community was also observed as a trigger of conflict between the two ethnic communities. Men who felt socially inadequate and marginalised favoured war so as to uplift their social stature after the war.

Gender theory was essential in identifying the position of women in the society, their involvement in the conflict and their continued active participation in the process of peace building. Although the women of Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties were not actively involved in the conflict between their communities, they were involved in dual roles in the fighting and their traditional reproductive roles: for example, they composed songs that made their men continue with the war. They are also recorded to have taken active roles in providing

for their families/clans which in turn made the men to concentrate on the war. Traditionally, men were responsible in making decisions of war, Sideris (2001) writes that traditional African politics and war were exclusive male clubs defined by hierarchy, authoritarian control and violence. D'Amico (1993) however argues that, the increasing presence of women in war does not change the fundamental gendered construction of war, but it merely serves to legitimise it.

Women were active participants in the peace building and reconciliation process in the region of Upper Nyakach and Sigowet. Despite their under-representation in the peace process after independence, and the period of 1960s and 1970s, their gradual participation in the 1980s resulted into two implications: first, it deconstructed the male-centric perceptions that women were weak gender and, two; it emphasised the importance of women as key actors in conflict management and peace building process. A good example of their active participation, the women formed groups from which they were able to unite conflicting sides and provide the necessary framework for establishing peace and reconciliation.

Conflict theory holds the view that, simmering tensions and conflictual relations among members of the society will trigger conflict/wars in future. From the study of the relations among the Luo of Upper Nyakach and the Kipsigis of Sigowet Sub-counties, the research observed that tensions still exist, and that the efforts by women to put an end to the tension is still far from achieving the peace envisaged. The efforts of the women, should be backed by sound government policies and structures for posterity, and help avert tensions and future conflict.

This study established that Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-counties are one of the regions in Kenya where the active participation of women in inter-ethnic peace building was faced with various challenges such as, marginalisation, physical injuries, inadequate resources to use in peace negotiations and even death. Yet, the same women struggled to design appropriate

strategies and methods to enable them actively and passively participate in societal development. The women adopted various techniques to promote peace in the region, and the impact of their participation was realised. The study confirmed that the women's participation started from their own local communities and then spilled over to the neighbouring communities.

This study has revealed that the conflicts between the Kipsigis and the Luo began during the pre-colonial period and continued in the post-independence period. The scale of conflicts during the pre-colonial period was minimal since a cattle rustling was not commercialized and the council of elders were effective in resolving disputes. Although the conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis continued during the colonial period, they were minimal because the colonial regime took drastic measures to restrain inter-tribal violence by punishing severely perpetrators of violence and cattle thieves. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the colonial regime, to some extent, contributed to these conflicts through land alienation, promotion of ethnic identities and creation of artificial boundaries. Moreover, they practiced the strategy of divide and rule, which reinforced hatred between various communities. The postcolonial regimes have failed to address, if not inherited and continued to practice colonial practices that encouraged inter-tribal feuds. A cattle rustling is a common thread that runs throughout the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. Hence, it was noted to be the main cause of conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis. Nonetheless, the commercialization of cattle rustling coupled with militarization of politics, ethnicity, corruption and poor dispute resolution mechanisms have led to exacerbation of conflict between these two communities in the postcolonial period. Most respondents cited the penetration of guns into their communities as another cause of conflict. They begged for disarming of armed individuals, noting that the government is the main institution with the authority, ability and machinery to execute this task. Such an operation, according to the

respondents, should be conducted in an inclusive and gradual manner based on proper consultation. Moreover, the government should take serious action against those who instigate inter-ethnic conflicts. Enhancing the working relationship between the provincial administration and the community through community policing and other initiatives that promote trust and information sharing to combat crime and enhance safety and security.

The findings of this study show that before colonialism, Kipsigis women did not participate in peace building mainly because of gender insensitive cultural practices, such as patriarchy. Luo women who had reached menopause were the only ones allowed to participate in peace talks. This finding resonated with gender theory which state that social, economic and cultural barriers hinder active participation of women in peace building activities.

In the post-independence period, things have changed in a positive manner for women regarding their roles in conflicts and peace building. The driving force in this paradigm shift is realization that women can play a critical role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as an appreciation of the positive contribution that women can make in post-conflict reconstruction and peace building. Engendering conflict prevention, management and resolution would help reduce or prevent gender-based violence including rape, forced pregnancy, sexual slavery and others. These crimes constitute breaches against the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols and should be handled as such.

These measures resonate well with the communities own efforts to involve women more in conflict prevention, management as well as peace building. The new constitution is clear about how the one-third gender principle should be enforced, this time in favour of women, special consideration of marginalized groups through special seats such as those set aside for women in the Senate, National assembly, party lists as well as within the county assemblies and in state

appointments. Nonetheless, these measures are not enough because women in Kenya continue to face daunting challenges, which could take decades to deal with. Poverty, cultural and religious prejudices, illiteracy, low esteem and a host of other issues are stacked against the full participation of women not only in conflict and peace matters, but also in other crucial national considerations. If these challenges remain unresolved, then efforts at prevention of conflicts, as well as peace building activities shall be difficult to achieve.

5.3 Conclusion

Despite the variations in the findings of this study, the data greatly helped to arrive at important concluding ideas, that women are not only victims, but important actors in deciding the outcomes of conflict and proving peaceful resolutions to end the conflict. It also helped to ascertain the achievements made in incorporating women in the peace building process as was envisioned by the United Nations Resolution 1325, of 2000.

Most of the respondents (men and women) affirmed that women should have equal opportunity to participate in peace building processes because they can make significant contributions peace building processes and utilise their negotiation skills. Moreover, women, children and people with disability are usually the majority of the victims in any conflict situation. The respondents themselves have come up with many practical ways of engaging women more in these endeavours. For example, empowering women and women groups financially through sound income generating activities so that they do not continue to beg their husbands the resources to conduct their activities. It will also include engendering of conflict prevention and management mechanisms and peace building as well as rolling out a massive

after this that the country can embark on dismantling age-old cultural structures that will smoothen the way for the full participation of women in national development.

The introduction of colonialism in the region resulted in a number of changes, some of which brought inter-ethnic conflicts. For instance, colonial demand for cattle increased pressure on the people making them to raid their neighbors. There was also an increase in border conflicts as a result of administrative demarcations. From the results of this study, it emerged that the Luo-Kipsigis woman was a highly differentiated group of social actors who utilized their resources, intellect and capacities to influence change. While traditions and the prevailing political conditions environment forced them into certain roles and conditions, they were able to ensure peace existed in their societies. The women maneuvered the prevailing conflict situations to improve their position. For example, the conflicts offered women new opportunities for exposure to women's rights, skills training, political participation, establishing women groups and organizational capacity building.

5.4 Recommendations

The findings, ideas and conclusions arrived at in this study cannot be left to gather dust on top of the shelves of libraries in the university, the findings of this study are essential for future scholars to help them build on existing knowledge and gaps realised. Future research works need to be undertaken in the area of the Conflict between the Kipsigis and the Luo in the period 1895-1963. There seems to be a gap in sources and extensive research by scholars in covering the conflict which has been existent for long.

Scholars in future should also research and provide findings on the participation of women in inter-ethnic conflicts across borders. This will help to engender the concept of women

and war: their active participation as perpetrators and not merely looking at women as victims of conflicts and/or wars.

Another important area of future study is on the capacity and potency of Luo-Kipsigis women peace initiatives in Upper Nyakach and Sigowet Sub-Counties. This will help the academia to measure whether the women achieved their objectives in maintaining peace. Similarly, the methods adopted by the women of Upper Nyakach and Sigowet help ease the tension and put an end to future conflict.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE

Conflicts during the Pre-colonial period

1. What were the causes of inter-ethnic conflicts between the Luo and Kipsigis during the pre-colonial period?
2. Were there any attempts made to resolve conflicts? If yes, how were the conflicts resolved?
3. What factors hindered peaceful reconciliation between Luo and Kipsigis?
4. Why did conflicts reoccur despite conflicts resolution mechanisms?
5. Did Luo and Kipsigis women participate in peace building and reconciliation during the pre-colonial period? If yes, how did they participate?
6. If no, why didn't they participate in conflict resolution processes? And were women themselves willing to participate in peace processes?

Colonial Period

1. Were there inter-ethnic conflict between the Luo and Kipsigis during the colonial period?
2. Was there any attempt made to resolve such conflicts? If yes, how were the conflicts resolved?
3. What are some of the factors that hindered peaceful reconciliation mechanisms during the colonial period?
4. Why did conflicts reoccur despite conflict resolution mechanisms?
5. Did Luo and Kipsigis women participate in peace building and reconciliation processes during the colonial period?

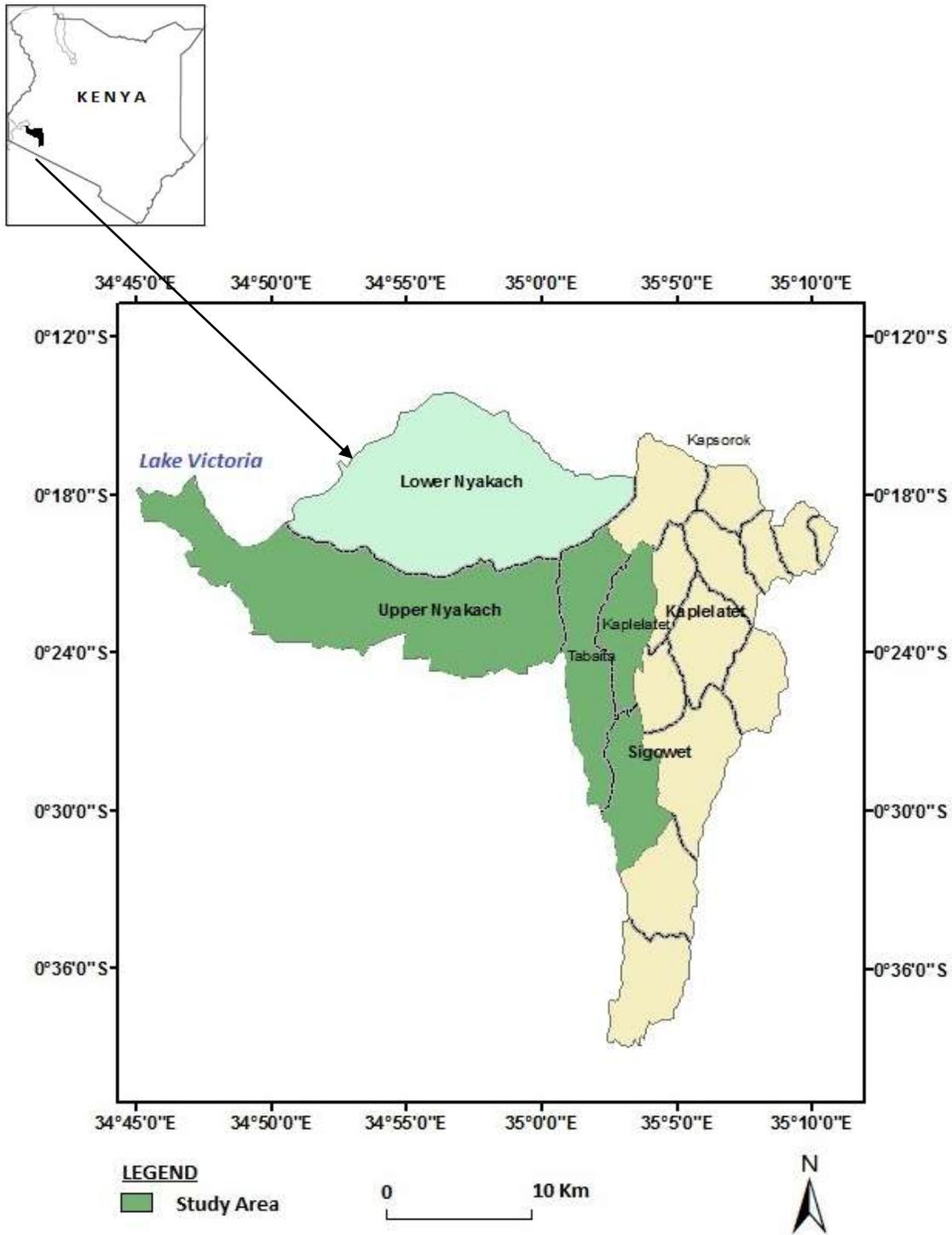
6. If yes, how did they participate? If no, why didn't they participate in conflict resolution processes? And were women themselves willing to participate in peace building initiatives?
7. Did colonialism affect women's participation in conflict resolution?

POST - INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

1. Have inter-ethnic conflicts occurred between Luo and Kipsigis since independence?
2. What conflict resolution mechanisms have been applied in resolving conflicts between Luo and Kipsigis?
3. What factors have hindered peaceful reconciliation since independence?
4. Why have conflicts reoccurred despite existence conflict resolution mechanisms?
5. Do women participate in peace building between Luo and Kipsigis?
6. If yes, how do they participate?
7. If no, why are they not participating in conflict resolution processes?

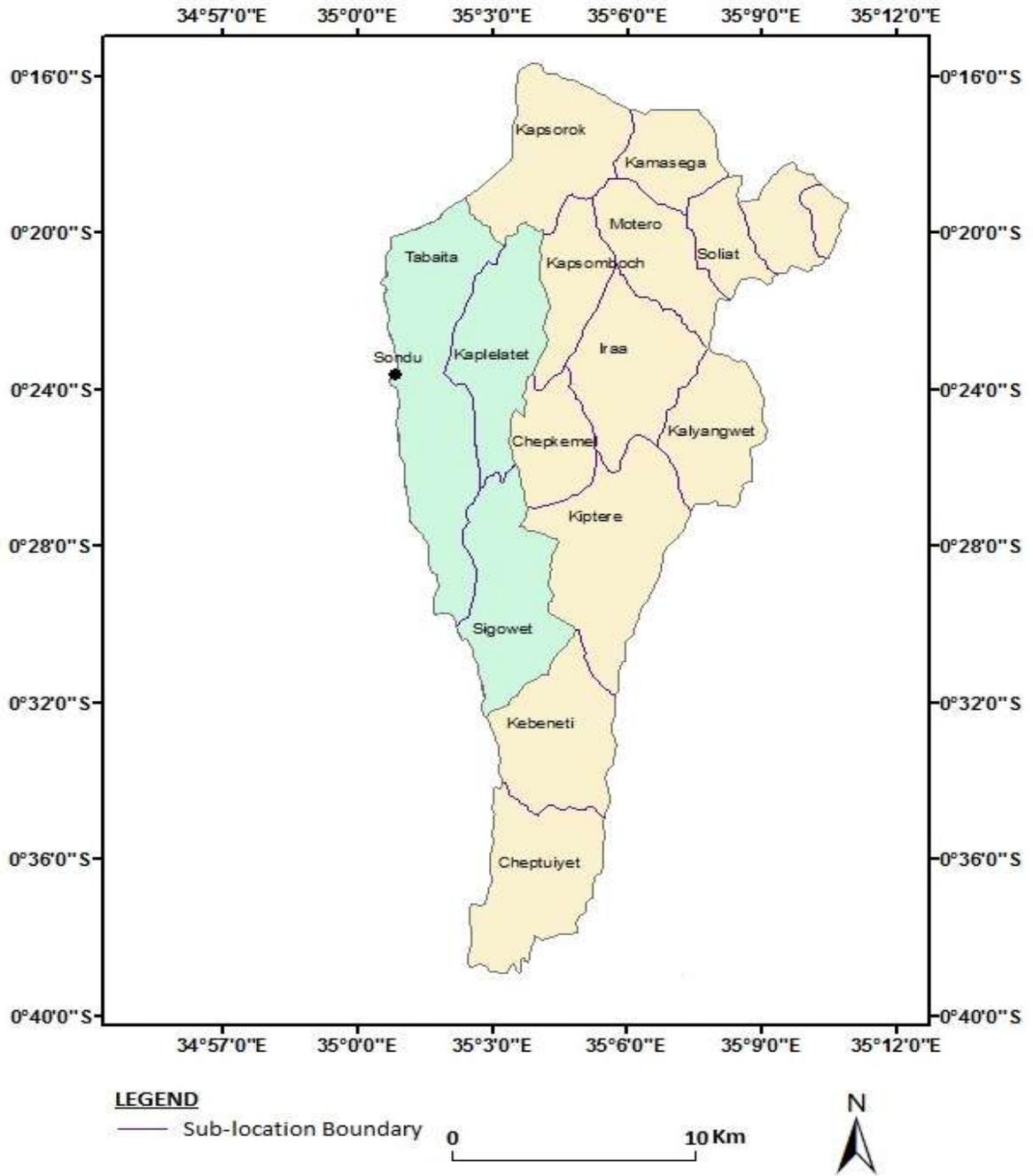
APPENDICES

Figure 3.1: Area of Study in the Map of Kenya



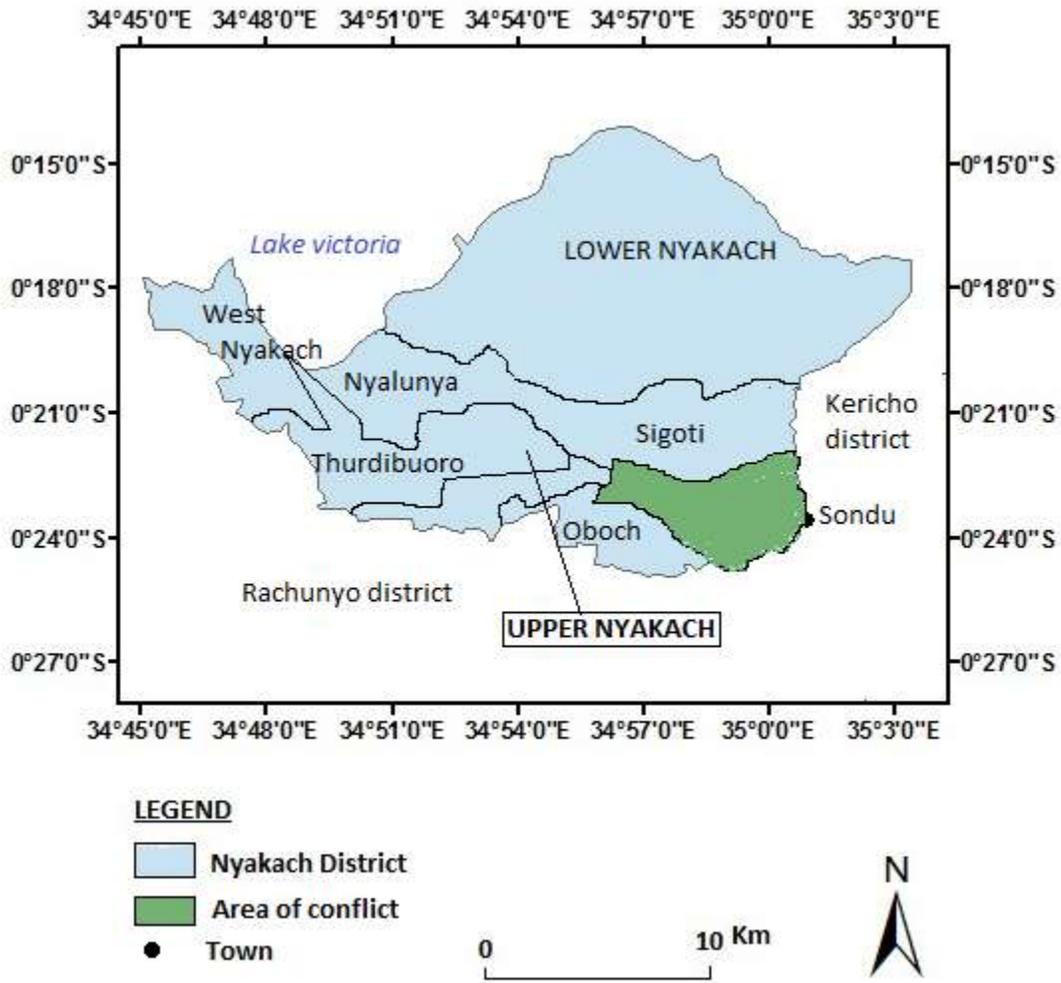
Source: KNBS Census 1999

Figure 3.2: Sigowet Division Showing Areas of Conflict



Source: KNBS Census 1999

Figure 3.3: Nyakach Sub-County Administrative Boundaries



Source: KNBS Census 1999