PROTRACTED CONFLICT IN MT. ELGON REGION (1963 - 2008):
TOWARDS A MULTI-CAUSAL ANALYSIS

CALEB MAIKUMA WAFULA

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work and has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other university. All sources in the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Signature…………………… Date: …………………

Caleb Maikuma Wafula

Department of History, Archelogy & Political Studies

This thesis has been submitted with our approval as University supervisors.

Signature…………………… Date: …………………

Dr. Joseph O. Wasonga

Lecturer, School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Kenyatta University

Signature…………………… Date: …………………

Mr. Peter Mbae

Lecturer, School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Kenyatta University
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the survivors of the protracted Mt. Elgon Conflict who have lived to tell the story as it was.
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The study is a result of encouragement and support from a diverse spectrum of actors, to whom I am greatly indebted. Foremost, thanks to the Almighty God who gave me life and commitment to accomplish this work.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ................................................................. ii

DEDICATION ..................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ......................................................... iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS ......................................................... v

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS ............................................... ix

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ................................................... xi

ABSTRACT .......................................................................... xiv

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ........................................... 1

1.0 The Background to the Study .......................................... 1

1.2 Statement of the Problem ............................................... 15

1.3 Purpose of the Study ..................................................... 18

1.4 Objectives of the Study .................................................. 18

1.5 Research Questions ..................................................... 19

1.6 Significance of the Study ............................................... 19

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study ............................ 21

1.8 Literature Review ........................................................ 24

1.8.1 Introduction ............................................................ 24

1.8.2 Theoretical Framework ............................................ 24

1.8.2.1 Protracted Social Conflict Theory ............................ 25

1.8.2.2 Conflict Trap Theory ........................................... 28
1.8.3 Empirical Review ................................................................. 30
  1.8.3.1 Ethnicity and Stereotyping as a Contributory factor to Mt Elgon
Conflict ................................................................. 30
  1.8.3.2 Natural Resources as a Contributory factor to Mt Elgon Conflict. 35
  1.8.3.3 Structural Factors as a Contributory factor in Mt Elgon Conflict . 39
  1.8.4 Summary of Literature Review ......................................... 44
  1.9 Research Methodology and Design....................................... 45
    1.9.1 Data Sources ......................................................................... 45
      1.9.1.1 Secondary Data ................................................................. 45
      1.9.1.2 Primary Data ....................................................................... 46
    1.9.2 Research Design ................................................................. 47
    1.9.3 The Target Population .......................................................... 50
    1.9.4 Interviews ............................................................................. 52
    1.9.5 Study Limitations ................................................................. 60
    1.9.6 Ethical Considerations ............................................................ 63
    1.9.7 Data Analysis ........................................................................ 66
  1.10 Chapters Outline ................................................................. 68

CHAPTER TWO: TRAJECTORY OF MT ELGON CONFLICT ..............69
  2.0 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................ 69
    2.2 Mt Elgon: Geographic Location, Ethnic and Tribal Composition ...... 70
      2.2.1 The Sabaot People ............................................................... 72
      2.2.2 The Bukusu People ............................................................... 74
    2.3 A Synopsis of Protracted Conflicts in Mt Elgon.......................... 77
      2.3.1 The Colonial Legacy .............................................................. 77
2.3.2 Post Colonial Period ........................................................................................................ 81

2.3.2.1 Phase I of Land Resettlement .................................................................................. 84
2.3.2.2 Phase II of Land Resettlement ................................................................................. 86
2.3.2.3 Phase III of Land Resettlement ............................................................................... 91
2.3.2.4 Formation of Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF) ................................................. 95
2.3.2.5 Other Militias in Mt Elgon ....................................................................................... 103
2.3.2.6 Government Response - Operation Okoa Maisha .................................................. 105
2.3.2.7 Mt Elgon Today ....................................................................................................... 107

2.4 Summary and Conclusion .............................................................................................. 108

CHAPTER THREE: PROTRACTED CONFLICT IN MT. ELGON: TOWARDS A MULTI-CAUSAL ANALYSIS ................................................................................................................. 110

3.0 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 110

3.2 Ethnicity and Ethnic Stereotyping ............................................................................... 110
3.3 Natural Resources and Protracted Conflicts ................................................................. 122
3.4 Structural factors and Protracted Mt Elgon Conflict .................................................... 146
3.5 Chapter Summary .......................................................................................................... 161

CHAPTER FOUR: CAUSES AND CONTINUATION OF MT ELGON CONFLICT: AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE ...................................................................................................................... 163

4.0 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 163

4.2 Ethnicity and Ethnic Stereotyping ............................................................................... 164
4.3 Natural Resources and the Protracted Conflict ............................................................. 194
4.4 Structural factors and the Protracted Mt Elgon Conflict ............................................. 207

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION ................................................................. 217

5.0 Study Summary .............................................................................................................. 217
5.2 Study Recommendations ................................................................. 218
5.3 Conclusion ....................................................................................... 221
5.4 Reflections: Key Areas for Further Research .................................. 223
REFERENCES .......................................................................................225
APPENDIX ..............................................................................................255
Appendix A: Informed Consent ............................................................... 255
Appendix B: Questionnaire Guideline ....................................................... 256
Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion ......................................................... 259
Appendix D: Research Permit ................................................................. 260
Appendix E: List of Interviews ................................................................. 262
Appendix F: Study Area Map ................................................................. 266
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

**Armed conflicts**: are defined as open, armed clashes between two or more centrally organized parties, with continuity between the clashes, in disputes about power over government and territory.

**Conflict**: This is a clash, contention, confrontation, battle, struggle, controversy or quarrel. Conflict may either be violent or non-violent.

**Conflict trap** – This is a force generated once violence has started and that it tends to perpetuate it.

**Ethnicity**- This is a body of individuals who purportedly share cultural or racial characteristics, especially common ancestry or territorial origin, which distinguish them from members of other groups.

**Natural Resource Scarcity**- refers to the extent to which valuable natural resources, such as water, land, and fuel, are unavailable for use by individuals.

**Natural Resource Conflict**- It is that dispute between groups who are competing for the control over, use of, or responsibility for natural resources.

**Operation Okoa Maisha** (Swahili for “Save A Life”). A military operation conducted by the Kenya Army in March 2008 to combat the SLDF insurgency in Mt. Elgon.
**Structural factors:** These are pervasive factors embedded in the policies, structures and fabric of a society and may create conditions for violence (such as social, political or economic inequalities/exclusion; systematic unemployment). Their influence on the probability of conflict operates slowly, and if not addressed for prolonged periods of time may eventually lead to physical violence as life in the structure becomes unbearable.

**Social Inequality** - It refers to the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and wealth between social classes, ethnic groups, or societies.

**Violence** - is the abusive use of force intended to compel or hurt people. In Mt Elgon violence adopts several modalities, shapes, forms and expressions. It is not confined to the militia gangs only, but comes with social, political, economic, ethnic and cultural issues.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACTS- African Centre for Technology Studies

ADC- Agricultural Development Corporation

CSO- Civil Society Organization

CIPEV-Commission for Investigation of the Post-Election Violence

DSIC- District Security Intelligence Committee

FGD- Focus Group Discussion

FCAS-Fragile and Conflict Affected States

GOK- Government of Kenya

HRW- Human Rights Watch

IDP-Internally Displaced Persons

ISS-Institute of Security Studies

ICG- International Crisis Group

KAMATUSA- Kalenjin Maasai, Turkana, and Samburu

KANU- Kenya Africa National Union

KLA-Kenya Land Alliance
KNCHR-Kenya National Commission for Human Rights

MDF- Moorland Defense Forces

MP- Member of Parliament

NARC- National Alliance Rainbow Coalition

NCCK-National Council of Churches of Kenya

NGO- Nongovernmental organization

NGOs -Non-Governmental Organizations

ODM-Orange Democratic Movement

OLF - Oromo Liberation Front

OECD-Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PRF: Political Revenge Movement

PNU- Party of National Unity

PSC- Protracted Social Conflict

PSIC- Provincial Security Intelligence Committee

SAIS- School for Advanced International Studies

SLDF- Sabaot Land Defense Force
SPLA- Sudan People’s Liberation Army

SALW- Small and Light Weapons

SDGs- Sustainable Development Goals

TJRC- Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission

UNDP- United Nations Development Program

WKHRW- Western Kenya Human Rights Watch
ABSTRACT

This study set out to examine the protracted nature of the Mt. Elgon conflict and the motivations driving it. The thesis of the study was that a multi-causal analysis of protracted conflicts provides a basis for a more comprehensive approach to conflict management and conflict transformation. The main objective of the study was to find out what has fueled and sustained the conflict in Mt. Elgon region. This is because the Mt. Elgon conflict has proven difficult to bring to an end. The choice of the study location was motivated by a number of factors such as the area being prone to political instability and violence resulting from complex and rapidly changing social economic dynamics. In addition, there is paucity of literature on the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt. Elgon region and on the motivations driving it. Methodologically, the study adopted a qualitative design, drawing from both primary and secondary sources in my discussion. This study used Edward Azar’s theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) and conflict trap theory by Paul Collier, V.L. Elliott, Harvard Hegre, Ankle Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol and Nicholas Sambanis (2003) as its analytical tools. These theories were purposely selected to explain and enhance the understanding of each of the variables affecting the research questions. The study examined Kenya’s historical and political development and established that the conflict in Mt. Elgon region has partly been contributed by the different regimes in independent Kenya. Consequently, the study found out that Mt. Elgon conflict is motivated by a number of factors among them land distribution, marginalization, shortchanging of the people of Mt. Elgon among other factors. The research recommends that there is need for full implementation of the devolution agenda, developing national consciousness, working on practical land reforms and lastly, need for justice and reconciliation in Mt. Elgon.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 The Background to the Study

Is the world sleepwalking into a crisis? World over, humanity is faced with challenges unparalleled in its history (IEP, 2018, P.3), including Conflict that seems to be inherent in all societies (Themnér & Wallensteen, 2012) and in the words of Perkins, (2002, p. 37): “war lies deep in human nature”. From a general perspective and looking at the unprecedented numbers of displaced people - fleeing due to war and conflict in countries such as Syria, Somalia, South Sudan, Venezuela, one could be inclined to take a Hobbesian view that the human condition is one of perpetual warfare (Hobbes, 1994, p. 74-78).

In accordance with available literature, nearly half of all nations in the world have experienced some form of external or internal armed conflict in the past half century (Blattman and Miguel 2010). While World Bank reports shows that about two billion people live in countries deemed Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCAS) (Burt, Hughes, and Milante 2014); an OECD (2015) report further warns that if current trends persist, by 2030; which is the horizon set by the international community for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), more than half of the world’s poor will be living in countries affected by high levels of violence. In the March 2014 issue of Journal of Peace Research, the authors demonstrate that the
keyword *violence* in the journal has been increasing over time while the usage of *peace* has been at the same level (Gleditsch & Strand 2014).

The African continent, remains the most war-torn continent in contemporary times (Adedeji *et al*., 1999; Andreas, 2010). At least three-Quarters of the world’s total war deaths in the late 1990s took place in Africa (Burbach and Fettweis 2014). A range of thinkers (Assefa, 1999; Huggins and Clover, 2005) view most African states to be synonymous with conflict and the various stages of conflict in developing their explanatory arguments. For instance, Van Tongeren 1999; and Jackson 2000a have described Africa as “the most warring region on the planet [and as] the hopeless continent [which] is at war with itself; poor; sick; and deeply in debt since it suffers from chronic conflict fatigue (See the Economist May 13-19, 2000). Scholars have described such states variously for instance, shadow states (Reno, 1999), quasi-states (Jackson, 1990), criminalized states (Bayart *et al*., 1999), disrupted states (Saikal, 2000) or failed states at one time or another in their post-independence period (Zartman 1995; Cornwall 1999).

According to Lindemann (2008), since the 1960s, a total of 24 sub-Saharan African countries (almost 50% of African states) have suffered war, while 22 other countries have managed to “avoid it.” Chronologically, since the Biafra war in Nigeria in 1960s and the current oil wars in the Niger Delta region, through the
North–South Sudanese civil war and the Darfur conundrum, to Rwandan Genocide in 1994 (Osaghae, 1992; Mazrui, 2004; Shah, 2014). The phenomena of African conflicts are further worsened by the recent experience of the Arab Spring that engulfed some of the culturally Arab states such as Egypt, Tunisia and Libya (Ansani & Daniele, 2012; Mulderig, 2013).

Since the dawn of the twenty-first century, the Horn of Africa remains the most conflict-intensive region of Africa, experiencing over 200 intricate and protracted armed conflicts; with some of its civil wars and insurgencies lasting for decades. The spillover effect of these conflicts has detrimental consequences not only to the region itself but also to the international community (Medhine, 2003; Williams, 2011). For some, the Horn of Africa has been seen as a textbook example of what is referred to in most literature today as a “fragile and/or a failing region,” with no single year passing with the sub region being free from conflict (Dereje, 2010; Tafesse, 2011).

Some *prima facie* examples are of the tragic scenarios that have bedevilled the region include the 2003-2004 civic unrest in Darfur, the protracted civil war in Somalia (Gumbi, 2015), deadly intra-state conflict in the Southern Sudan since December 2013; the recent 2015 Burundi insurgency; not forgetting the long-standing interstate animosity between Ethiopia and Eritrea. As a result, peace and security have remained the major preoccupations of the region.
Other persistent “low-profile” conflicts exist in each of the countries of the region but have not been given the required prominence though they continue to devastate the lives of the majority. These include pastoral conflicts, land-based conflicts, conflicts over water resources, and wildlife/human conflicts among others (Kimenju, 2004; Weyesa, 2011). These challenges threaten human security, socio-economic development, the sovereignty and territoriality of states, and the legitimacy and stability of political regimes (Habu et al. 2018).

For her part, Kenya’s regional significance cannot be overemphasized. The country has for decades been considered as an Island of peace in the middle of a tempest-ridden sea, with a burgeoning economy and good international ties built on commerce and tourism (Modi & Shekhawal, 2008). This image was especially enhanced by the successful elections of 2002 that saw relative ethnic cohesion experienced in the country; following the defeat of the incumbent party: Kenya African National Union (KANU) which had been in power since independence in 1963 and the peaceful assumption of power by an opposition coalition National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) led by Mwai Kibaki (VonDoepp & Villalón, 2005; Mueller, 2008). The aftermath of this historic event marked the beginning of what Kenyans saw as a new era, infact Kenyans were rated as the most optimistic people on the planet (Murunga & Nasongo, 2006).
Kenya has a neighborhood that is ravaged by bloody civil wars, as such, it was bound sooner or later to catch the bug of instability (Murunga & Nasongo, 2006). Before going further into the argument, two clarifying statements are in order. First, we take as our starting point the recognition that lying east of Kenya is Somalia, a failed state without a national government; to the north is Ethiopia which is still smarting from a protracted civil war with Eritrea; and to northwest is Uganda which has been recovering from civil war in the wake of Idi Amin’s most repressive military coup in the 1970s. Further away is Rwanda, whose 1994 genocide stands out as the conflagration whose geographic scope, level of civilian mobilisation, ferocity of violence, and epic proportions were mind boggling. Within a hundred days, an estimated one million people had been wantonly massacred in a genocidal frenzy whose swiftness stunned the world. Both refugees and exiles from these countries moved to Kenya, some of them indoctrinating Kenyans with their foul experience, sometimes wooing gullible Kenyans to emulate their unlawful schemes (Oucho, 2002; Galaty, 2005).

Second, ethno-regional schisms have lurked on the surface. Kenya has had its fair share of intermittent turmoil characterized by political instability, ethnic conflict, intense human suffering and misery, economic decay and breakdown of the rule of law (Klugman et al., 1999). Other security challenges include the ever-increasing criminal activities and the continual internal threat of “terrorist” attacks, youth radicalization and militarization (Kagwanja, 2009; Oloo, 2010; Branch, 2011).
Harper (2012) and Eriksson (2013) point out that Kenya’s national security and stability as well as economy have been destabilized by waves of terror attacks which continue to threaten peace in the country (Karimi, 2013; Anderson & McKnight, 2014). The above therefore point to the fact that conflict in Kenya is not a new phenomenon.

The country, experienced an extremely violent colonization, and the post-independence settlement failed to provide any closure on the different conflicts which had arisen during the colonial period (Ayoob, 1995). This gave rise to protracted and institutionalized waves of violent conflicts and social tensions (Oyugi, 1997; Butler, 2010). Kenya’s violence has a 5-year life cycle with elections serving as the incubators (Otieno, 2009). Dating back to the early 1990s; with the introduction of multi-party politics, violent tribal clashes have periodically dominated the country’s political agenda (Akiwumi Report, 1999; Apollos, 2001; Kamungi, 2009; Ajulu, 2003; Waki report, 2008).

In December 2007, Kenya tethered on the brink of a civil war when violent conflict fueled by the volatile question of equitable resource and opportunity distribution engulfed the country. This was catalyzed by a hotly contested and disputed presidential election; which shattered the image of the country as an island of political stability (Elischer, 2008; Klopp and Kamungi, 2008; Kanyinga, 2009; Murunga, 2011). For two months, heavy ethno-political violence descended into
spirals of hatred and revenge, as many Kenyans decided to trample on the fundamental human rights of their fellow Kenyans with impunity. The 2007/2008 post-election violence claimed more than one thousand lives and forced approximately 300,000 to 500,000 people into IDP camps (Andreassen e et al., 2008; HRW, 2008; Bayne, 2008; CIPEV, 2008).

Whilst the above conflicts are of vital importance in understanding protracted nature of conflicts and the drivers motivating it; this study aims to broaden the literature by examining the case of Mt Elgon; a region inundated with implosive violent and nonviolent, intermittent, endemic, and intractable conflicts, a situation that has raised difficult questions about the growing security dilemma in the region. The 2006-2008 episode marked a watershed in these conflicts because it was the bloodiest and most protracted, gaining international notoriety largely because of the tragedies it caused and because of the brutal and often bizarre behavior of the Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF); a rag tag militia gang which abducted thousands of youths (Simiyu, 2008; KNCHR, 2008, p. 6; Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2008; Alston, 2009). The TJRC, (2013, p. 66), notes that SLDF transformed from a small militia calling themselves ”Janjaweed” and grew quickly to a massive militia in possession of heavy arms. It is reported that as of late 2007, over 300 people had died as a result of the conflict, while over 60,000 people were displaced from their homes (Wakhungu et.al, 2008); a context that strengthens the
need to re-examine protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the drivers motivating it.

This far, it is obviously not possible in an introduction to give an extended account of these conflicts except to point out that what such depictions of violence tend to suggest is that the causes of conflicts are inextricably as complex as the challenges of resolving them. This raises the following question: What are we to call these conflicts? Protracted Social Conflict (Psc), the seminal work of Dr. Edward Azar (1978, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1988, & 1990), best captures the important characteristic of this enigmatic and costly phenomenon. But what is Protracted Social Conflict (PSC)? Better still what constitutes a Protracted Social Conflict (Psc)? why are they intractable? What characteristics distinguish intractable conflicts from more tractable, resolvable conflicts? (Coleman, 2003).

Across scholarly literature, there is divergence in the conceptualization as to what PSC is. There are differing definitions, parameters, applications, and characteristics among researchers makes a consistent, accurate, and precise conceptualization of what PSC is difficult to discern. Further to this, other social scientists such as Goertz and Diehl (1993); Huth and Russet (1993); and Mor and Maoz (1994) have introduced additional concepts with the same intention to describe severe conflicts such as enduring rivalries and malignant conflicts (Deutsch, 1985), or deep-rooted conflicts (Burton, 1987; Mitchell, 1981).
According to Gray (2003); protracted conflicts endure over long periods of time and resist the most persistent attempts at resolution. Most scholars of protracted conflicts have added to the theoretical foundation established by Azar. For instance, Putnam and Wondolleck (2003) note that “intractable conflicts are messy, demanding, stressful, exhausting, and costly both in human and material terms.” Accordingly, Crighton and MacIver (1991) points out that protracted conflicts are bloody, encompass a number of armed factions, lack cohesive organizations, and generate mistrust and resistance to negotiations.

From the foregoing, it is not surprising that the study of conflicts has become one of the central areas of research in the social sciences. Protracted Social Conflicts have attracted considerable interest among scholars and strategic study analysts from different disciplines, such as demography, history, social anthropology, political science and international relations among others; who have devoted considerable time and efforts in developing numerous theoretical frameworks with varied explanatory powers and contextual relevance, hoping that a better understanding of the causes of these conflicts will increase the possibility of preventing them. In this regard, protracted conflicts are often attributed to the termination of the Cold War and the advent of globalization; to sustained population growth amid “environmental scarcity” (Homer-Dixon, 1999); to violent youth culture (Richards, 1996); to democratic struggles (Ake, 2000); to group
grievances (Stewart, 2000); or to a struggle for resources by elites (Collier & Hoeffler, 1996).

One key question that emerges at this point is: To what extent are these perspectives valid in understanding the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it? It can be noted that, indeed the above conflict paradigms have gained traction in explaining the protracted Mt. Elgon Conflict as well. There has been an explosion of writing and a vast body of academic literature is already available on the protracted Mt Elgon from renowned scholars and policy analysts including: (Were, 1967a; 1967b; Wolfe, 1969; Wandibba 1972; Goldschmidt, 1976; Makila, 1982; 1986; Aseka, 1989; Kiliku, 1992; Kakai, 2000; Wafula, 2000; Médard Claire, 2008; Simiyu, 2008; Waithaka, 2013) as probably some of the most sophisticated study on the Mt Elgon conflict to date.

Among the dominant explanatory perspective is the primordial notion of the Mt Elgon conflict that has gained remarkable prominence in the Mt Elgon scholarship. Some scholars perceive the Mt Elgon conflicts as a primordial inevitability rooted in the underlying phenomenological features and differences among the “heterogeneous” communities and ethno-cultural groups arbitrarily bunched together. Those who subscribe to this school of thought include (Weatherby, 1962; Kiliku, 1992; Mwasserah, 2008; Otieno et. al, 2009; Lynch, 2011). For instance, the question of ethnic “outsiders” settling on “our” sacred ethnic homeland forms
the backdrop to Gabrielle Lynch’s 2011 work on the politics of indigenousness in the Mt. Elgon region of Kenya. According to this reading, ethnicity has become the framework around which violence is pervasively organised for a variety of societal grievances (Lynch, 2011).

The above research findings match well with, Otieno et. al, (2009), who notes that Mt Elgon conflict serves as an example of ethnic rivalries transforming the nature of conflict from a localised issue into an identity-based conflict. In doing so, the conflict has become more protracted. These sentiments are closely shared by Mwasserah (2008) who observes that there has been concerted efforts “by the clans to alienate each other and clear the area of the other clans.” On his part, Weatherby (1962) published the first of these, noting that the Sabaot have over the years consistently been viewed as a war-like community of cattle rustlers by their neighbours. Staying with the Primordial perspective, the second study was Wolfe’s 1969, which established from Bukusu and Sabaot oral tradition accounts of several quarrels between the two communities, the most famous being the “War of Chonge” and the “War of Kikai”.

On the contrary, another line of research tends to claim that the Primordial perspective is an over-simplistic manner in which to view the protracted Mt Elgon conflicts. Instead they emphasise that it is vital to be aware of other factors such as elite manipulation. In this regard, Makila (1986) and Kakai (2000) both note that
the communities in Mt Elgon share a lot in common making it difficult to imagine the existence of any ethnic group that can be defined as pure. They further argue that the Bukusu and the Sabaot share not only in some clans and linguistic aspects but also their history of origin as well as their cultural and economic interests. This commonness makes value of interdependence a strong mechanism, which aims at bringing about conflict resolution.

These sentiments are closely shared by Simiyu (2008), who in a valuable contribution to the literature on protracted Mt Elgon conflict asserts that “while the ethnic factor may have been dominant in explaining the conflicts of the 1990s in the Mount Elgon area (which pitted Sabaots against the other communities and notably the Bukusu), it has not been as dominant explanatory factor in the latest conflict as the main combatants belong to the same ethnic community.” The point this scholarship shows is that, ethnicity has a specific history in Mt Elgon and that the ethnic categories in which locals acted during the conflict were neither natural nor “ancient.” Rather, the categories were modern and constructed (Simiyu, 2008).

Moreover, a bulk of literature has theorised and articulated what they view as causes of the protracted Mt Elgon conflict; notably, they all directly or indirectly attribute the conflict to the neoclassical economics paradigm of scarcity especially land. A case in point is Médard Claire (2008), who made the theme a cornerstone of her work by asserting that repeated episodes of land allocations and then
evictions, dictated by political favoritism, generated frustrations within the community which are now finding expression in fierce territorial claims by ethnic groups. Closely related is Simiyu (2008) assertion that the conflict in Mount Elgon is in many ways a culmination of a long history of the Sabaot community’s struggle against historical injustice in the form of colonial disinheritance of their ancestral land without compensation by either the colonial government or successive post-colonial governments. This argument corresponds to the assertions made in a number of studies by (Obi, 1999; Nyadimo Eric, 2005, Ngetich&Kwalia, 2007; Siringi, 2007; Wakhungu et al., 2008; Waithaka 2013) who all attribute the causes of the Mt Elgon conflict to a struggle for land resources.

Alongside these more recent topics, other more traditional factors which are suspected to be root causes of protracted violent conflict is the issue of militarization. Works of Mkutu (2008) and Pkalya et al., (2003) provide an interesting review of the militarization in Mt Elgon by noting that the area is at the center of three major international illegal arms and ammunitions trafficking. They both point out that arms proliferation from the conflict-ridden neighboring countries of the region has made cattle rustling a deadly and destructive practice. Again, from the work of some scholars of the region comes a nuanced reading that seems to be well grounded in the culture of violence and militarization. Such comprehensive studies include: Wagner (1949:40) talks of “walled villages” and Wandibba (1972: 22) “fortified villages”. Later, Makila (1982) wrote a monograph

To this end, it is important to note that for all the richness and fascinating details, the past scholarships on Mt Elgon have attempted to provide different perspectives on the nature of societal relations in Mt Elgon. While the scholarship is necessary and of unquestionable merit in understanding the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it; it is however arguable that too much emphasis is laid upon the monocausal perspectives, causing a “tyranny of the single-cause” in the explanation of the causes of protracted conflict; as they focus on certain dimension of the conflict at the expense of the others, thus fails to account for the multi-causality of the violence. For instance, Obi (1999) Resources, population and conflicts: two African case studies; Kitau, (2007) Kenya: Mt. Elgon Violence a Reflection of our Collective Amnesia; Mutai, (2007) Bitter exchange in Parliament over Mt. Elgon; Oondo, et al., (2007), Kenya: Terro Zone-Thirteen MPS Urge Peace Talks with Militia. Médard Claire, (2008) Ethnic politics, land and administration in Chebyuk (1971-2008); Najum Mushtaq, (2008); Simiyu (2008) Militianisation of resource conflicts; Ngetich and Kwalia, (2008); Achoka and Njeru, (2009); Wakhungu, et. al, (2008) Land Tenure and Violent Conflict in
Kenya; Waithaka, (2013); The role of ethnicity in the land conflict in Mount Elgon region in Western Kenya

An important aspect worth noting is that, the theoretical basis of the above knowledge is quite limited, in the sense that it does not offer much by way of generalisability and predictability of the conflict; yet there is evident indication of the multi-causal, multidimensional and inter-connected nature of the conflicts in the area. With such deficiencies and in order to guarantee - at the least - a coherent understanding of the protracted nature of Conflicts and the drivers motivating it; there is need for further thorough in-depth research to disaggregate and re-conceptualize the protracted nature of the conflict and the motivations driving conflict in the Mt Elgon area. It’s on this basis that this study diverts from the dominant scientific trend single cause and adopts a multicausal approach in understanding the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Protracted, intractable conflicts mark a new research frontier in the field of conflict studies. Locally in Kenya, these intense, inescapable conflicts could best be illustrated by the situation in Mt Elgon. The conflict that was witnessed between 2006 and 2008 in many ways confirms the fears many have had about the fragility and the growing security dilemma in the region. Although lately the guns have been
silent, the conflict can re-surface, moreover in a nastier form even if it may not be by SLDF.

While there are no precise figures on the human toll, some estimates put the number of those killed in the conflict at about 300 people and thousands rendered internally displaced people (IDPs), in the neighbouring areas of Bungoma, Busia and Kitale; while some fled to seek refuge in the neighbouring country of Uganda (Wakhungu et.al, 2008).

This and following the influential work of Herbert Wulf, unsatisfactory outcome of many attempts to resolve conflicts peacefully has to do with the “insufficient analysis of the root causes of conflict,” which in turn leads to competing and contradictory strategies. In this context, the Mt Elgon conflict has attracted a plethora of scholars and practitioners; who have devoted considerable time and efforts to study its causes, courses and consequences. But, by and large, a perennial problem of analysis of the conflict is that these conceptualizations are too limited and rudimentary, with most explanations linked to certain dimensions of the conflict at the expense of others; little attempt has been made to provide a sustained and systematic discussion of the multi-causality of conflict.

This has raised more questions than provided answers as the causes of the conflict remains as obscure as ever, fragmented between disciplinary boundaries, which produce conflicting and often mutually exclusive theories, thus necessitating a
more in-depth study. Most importantly, there is a disturbing lack of integrative knowledge on the subject. It is on the basis of this observation that Kalevi Holsti’s comment can be put into perspective, “there is no single cause of a conflict. Nor is there any single precondition for sustainable peace. Different factors vary in importance and reinforce or neutralise each other to cause and sustain protracted conflicts. Conflict analysis must therefore include assessing the relative importance of the different indicators and their inter-relationship,” (K Holsti, 1989).

In fact, what this scholar is rebelling against is what has commonly been referred to as the “tyranny of the single-cause” in the explanation of protracted conflicts. Taking into cognizance the protracted nature of Mt Elgon conflict, this study aims to reframe the debate on the causes of Mt Elgon conflict by transcending the conventional and fashionable “tyranny of the single-cause” and adopts a Multicausal approach in analyzing Mt Elgon Conflict; a largely unexplored or overlooked aspect of the conflict that seems to have the most decisive implications to sustainable peace in the area. The study specifically hypothesis that it is not enough simply to look at the single factors that cause the conflict rather, it is necessarily important to carefully analyze the different factors that are at work in the conflict and the ways in which they combine to cause and sustain protracted conflict. It is for this reason that, in contrast to the traditionally posed questions of “what are the causes of the Mt Elgon conflict?” This study asks some fundamental but seemingly unresolved questions that have been more or less glossed over in the
past scholarship: “In what ways does ethnic identity and stereotyping contribute to
the Mt Elgon Conflict? How do natural resources contribute to the Mt Elgon
crlict? How do structural factors contribute to the Mt Elgon Conflict? And lastly
how do these factors mutually reinforce or neutralise each other to cause and sustain
the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon?”

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In line with the issues explicated in the above statement of the problem, this study
sought to understand the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the
motivations driving it. Specifically, the study sought to examine how ethnic identity
and stereotyping contributes to the Mt Elgon Conflict; explore how natural
resources contribute to the Mt Elgon conflict; Find out how structural factors
contribute to the Mt Elgon Conflict and lastly determine how these factors reinforce
or neutralise each other to produce and sustain the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study specifically sought to explore and investigate the following:

a) To examine how ethnic identity and stereotyping contributes to the Mt
   Elgon Conflict;

b) To explore how natural resources, contribute to the Mt Elgon conflict;

c) To find out how structural factors contribute to the Mt Elgon Conflict; and
d) To determine how these factors, reinforce or neutralise each other to produce and sustain the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon.

1.5 Research Questions

In conducting this analysis, the study sought to address the following pertinent questions:

   a) To what extent does ethnic identity and stereotyping contribute to the Mt Elgon Conflict?
   b) In what ways do natural resources contribute to the Mt Elgon conflict?
   c) How do structural factors contribute to the Mt Elgon Conflict?
   d) How does ethnicity, natural Resources and structural factors reinforce or neutralise each other to produce and sustain the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon.

1.6 Significance of the Study

At the start of any research project, the first question posed should be: *is this research needed?* Following the much-cited argument of King et al., (1994, pp.7-9), there are two main criteria for scientific research. First, all research should pose a question of importance to the real world. Second, each research should “make a contribution to an identifiable scholarly literature by increasing our collective ability to construct verified scientific explanations of some aspect of the world,” (King et al., 1994: 15).
The first criterion is answered without any additional argument: the causes of protracted conflicts are of great importance to the real world. Placed upon the spectrum of human behaviour, the 2006-2008 violent conflict in Mt Elgon that claimed the lives of over 300 people, represents the absolute extremity of appalling and abhorrent interaction. As such, the conflict period stands as a defining moment for everyone concerned with the peace and security of Mt Elgon and Kenya as a whole. Therefore, the conflict needs to be analyzed, discussed, and remembered.

On the second criterion, understanding the contribution of this study ought to acknowledge the fact that most explanations offered so far largely focus on single factors, but no scholarship entirely examines the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it. By adopting a Multi causal analysis, this study enriches our conceptualization and understanding of the deep causes that drive protracted violent conflicts and creates a more comprehensive basis to explore fresh options for peace building and conflict transformation in Kenya; and Mt Elgon in particular. While by systematically analysing the key variables of the conflict, this study serves as an added value to peace and conflict scholarship that is at infancy and needs to be enhanced significantly by contributing relevant, new, and constructive discourses on these topics in addition to providing the basis for further research on the protracted Mt Elgon conflict that has resulted in the loss of many lives and property destroyed.
Furthermore, the findings of this study are likely to be relevant beyond the boundaries of the research area. Without understanding the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it, it will not be possible to develop programs, create policies or understand the resources required to build peaceful and resilient societies. In this sense, this study produces cutting-edge research, knowledge and evidence for state and non-state actors that is crucial in shaping the changes in terms of policy, regulation and coordination processes, needed for the broader vision of sustainable peace to be realized in Mt Elgon and Kenya as a whole.

On the whole, the study enriches rather than reduces the debate on the protracted Mt Elgon conflict, by discerning some of the main questions around the protracted nature of Protracted Mt Elgon Conflicts and the drivers motivating it.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited to understanding the nature of the protracted Mt Elgon conflicts and the drivers motivating it. The choice of the study setting is motivated by the fact that the area is prone to violence resulting from complex and rapidly changing social-economic and political dynamics, of which there is paucity of literature on the protracted nature of the conflict and the motivations driving it. The geographical boundaries of the protracted Mt Elgon conflicts span a much wider reach and include a broader constellation of actors with diverse interests to as far
as neighbouring Uganda. However, this study is limited to the intrastate factors behind the protracted violent conflicts in Mt Elgon. This is in line with Azar’s (1990) contention that “the sources of such conflicts lie predominantly within (and across) rather than between states.” Specifically, the study focused on Kopsiro division. There are a number of reasons for this choice: first, Kopsiro had borne the brunt of the violent conflict at the hands of the SLDF who claimed to be fighting for their land rights. Second, Kopsiro is where the controversial Chebyuk settlement scheme is located. Finally, owing to financial constraints, I was not able to carry out my research in the whole of Mt Elgon.

The study was based on a multi-causal analytical approach because of the conviction that measures to be taken in any context of protracted violent conflicts must be based on a thorough understanding of the dynamics of, say, the conflict. Thus, where possible, the explanatory side of the study rather than the descriptive is given priority. Menkhaus (2003), offers some words of caution, “determining which causes are incidental and which are at the heart of armed conflict is not an easy task,” as such, in view to the enormous factors behind the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon, this study is not designed to present an exhaustive portrait of all shades and categories of the causes of the conflict, as such efforts would be quite superficial.
Alternatively, three separate clusters of potentially causal factors were identified which were ethnic identity and stereotyping; structural factors and natural resources, specifically land resources because land has been numerously featured as a major factor in the conflict. These reflects broadly accepted and applied clusters, but one needs to bear in mind that there is a large degree of overlap among these clusters or between separate factors conveniently arranged within these clusters. Hence, these clusters are theoretical “container concepts”, and merely represent useful devices to analyse the complexity of the interlinked causation.

The aim of the study would not be achieved without considering several important events that took place earlier. The events provide a significant point of departure, for they accord the research and analysis a wider cast on the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial shifts in relations among the communities living in Mt Elgon. Within this timeframe and geographical delimitation, the research attempts to lay emphasis on the 2006 to 2008 period. This was the period that saw the intensified conflict in Mt Elgon allegedly over disputed land resettlement schemes; precipitating the formation of the SLDF a rag tag militia to fight for the land rights which triggered an intensive military intervention (Simiyu, 2008).
1.8 Literature Review

1.8.1 Introduction

The Literature review of this study was informed by a multidisciplinary of assumptions, perspectives, and ideological stances spanning a number of fields including peace and conflict, political science, psychology, criminology, sociology, and history. Theorists and practitioners from these fields have contributed to further developing our understanding of the conflict phenomena, yet it has generally raised more questions than provided answers. The following sections present a general overview of the scholarly research, highlighting the range of approaches and examining the progress that has been made thus far.

1.8.2 Theoretical Framework

A theory is a construct, which assists us in selecting and interpreting facts. In this context, the study relies on two important and highly relevant theories, aimed at understanding the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it through use of a multi-causal approach. Edward Azar’s theory of Protracted Social Conflict (Psc) and conflict trap theory by Paul Collier, V.L. Elliott, Harvard Hegre, Ankle Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol and Nicholas Sambanis (2003) were employed as analytical tools. The theories were carefully selected to explain and enhance the understanding of each of the variables affecting the research questions.
1.8.2.1 Protracted Social Conflict Theory

Azar’s theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC, 1991) takes into account the “new type of conflict” which is distinct from traditional disputes over territory, economic resources, or East-West rivalry as it revolves around the questions of communal identity. Azar’s PSC contains the following four clusters of variables identified as “preconditions” to violent conflict: “communal content”, “human needs”, “governance and state’s role” and ‘international linkages”. In coherence with the opinion of Brown (1986); whether or not in any one case these four clusters of preconditions for PSC activate overt conflicts depend upon the more contingent actions and events of “process dynamics”. Within Azar’s PSC, these take the form of “communal actions and strategies”, “state actions and strategies” and “built in mechanisms of conflict”. The rationale for these particular variables is discussed as each dimension is explored.

To start with the communal content cluster, Azar suggests that the “most useful unit of analysis in protracted social conflict situations is the identity group- racial, religious, ethnic, cultural and others”. This is based on the view that it is the relationship between the state and identity groups—“the disarticulation between the state and society as a whole” is dominated by a single communal group or a coalition of a few communal groups that are unresponsive to the needs of other ethnic groups in the society, which strains the social fabric and eventually breeds fragmentation and PSC (Miall et al., 2005; Ramsbotham et al., 2012). This cluster
is important to understand how ethnic identity and stereotyping; in addition to the structural factors specifically, deep societal inequality have contributed to the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon.

The second cluster responsible for PSC as identified by Azar is the “deprivation of human needs” such as security needs (nutrition, housing, clothing, and physical security), access needs (political and economic participation), and acceptance need (recognition and identity needs) which in turn lead to structural victimization. When grievances resulting from such need deprivation are not addressed, it leads to PSC. In this regard, the human needs cluster helps answer how structural factors have contributed to the conflicts, for instance the study investigates the claims that economic marginalization of needs led to the formation of the SLDF to fight for community rights.

Thirdly, “governance and state’s role” has been identified as a factor responsible for PSC. Here Azar notes that, incompetent, parochial, fragile and authoritarian governments characterize states, which experience PSC. In such countries, political authority is often vested in a single or few dominant groups, thus monopolizing the power. Decentralization of power lack in such countries where bureaucratic rule is imposed from metropolitan centers. Also, PSC tends to concentrate in those countries where the rate of population growth is very high with very limited resource base. In this respect, the cluster helps provide answers on how the structural factors contribute to conflict, in addition to how the aspect of natural
resource scarce scarcity precipitated by increased population contributes to the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon.

The final cluster is the “pattern of international political and economic linkages”. Almost every internal conflict involves the neighboring countries in one way or the other. Their role may be either supportive or exploitative. Third parties may escalate the conflict by taking a biased stand to one of the parties in conflict or help in de-escalating the conflict by helping in peace negotiations. In this regard the cluster helps elucidate under the structural factors how the claims of proliferation of Small and Light Weapons from neighbouring countries contribute to the protracted conflicts in Mt Elgon.

To this end, does this conceptualization capture the nature of protracted conflicts? Do Azar’s conditions accurately conceptualize all the components and conditions that support continued violent social behavior across time in the most valid manner given its intractable and multi-faceted traits? In this sense, although the Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) theoretical framework is interesting and actually to some degree underscores the study questions, it however fails to explain how these factors reinstate each other, relate, interact and sustain the protracted conflict, thus the need for another theory to complement the Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) theory.
1.8.2.2 Conflict Trap Theory
The exponents of this theory are Paul Collier, V.L. Elliott, Harvard Hegre, Ankle Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol and Nicholas Sambanis (2003). For the authors, a basic assumption of this theory is that once a conflict has erupted, it tends to develop a momentum of its own. Peace seemingly becomes elusive and hard to restore. Even when peace is restored, it often does not endure (Collier et. al 2003). The proponents of conflict trap ascribed the lengthy pattern of a typical conflict to a number of interlocking factors. Conflicts in multiethnic societies are enduring possibly on account of their ready vulnerability to the rallying, massaging and mobilization of ethnic sentiments for both the warring groups and the government. In addition, in a plural society, particularly where the population has significant grievances, conflict usually becomes an effective political strategy for pursuit of their interests and goals. Also, even if the custodians of power and authority in the society are willing to concede to the demands of the groups, they are usually neither trusted nor believed to have credible means of committing the warring factions to agreement. The warring groups might be afraid that once they hold the olive branch the custodians of power and authority would renege on any agreement (Collier et. Al, 2003).

Furthermore, it is also contended that it is even difficult for the custodians of power and authority to concede to demands of the warring groups because such could encourage the flowering, proliferation, mushrooming and radicalization of other
groups with opposing objectives. Also, a significant pattern to lengthy conflict is the unequally distributed income and a low average income, possibly on account of the cost of sustaining conflict is low if there is an expansive layer of economic destitute and possibly significantly weak institutions such as the security agencies, which are unable to deter and apprehend violators of the laws. More so, sustaining conflict has become easier because the warring groups have easy access to armaments for prosecuting conflict (Collier et. Al, 2003).

Yet, very important to the lengthy pattern of conflict is that once a conflict has occurred, a template is raised. It becomes difficult to return to status quo. Presumably, conflict reinforces hatred, and may shift the balance of influential interests in favour of continued conflict. Also, the criminal entrepreneurs that profit from the conflict would do anything including sabotaging peace process for it to continue. According to extensive research conducted by Paul Collier et al (2003:12), violence entrepreneurs, whether primarily political or primarily commercial, may gain from conflict to such an extent that they cannot credibly be compensated sufficiently to accept peace. Those who see themselves as political leaders benefit from war because they can run their organizations in hierarchical, military style with power concentrated in their own hands, something much more difficult to justify in peacetime. Those who see themselves as extortionists benefit from the absence of the rule of law in the areas they control. However, leaders
invest heavily in expensive military equipment that becomes redundant once they agree to peace.

The above theoretical excursion reveals various perspectives for the appreciation of violence. Notably, each of the perspectives may be perfunctory, deficient, incomplete and restrictive but in sum they are illuminating and complementary. As such the conflict trap theory is apt and relevant for the appreciation of the protracted nature of the conflict and the interlocking factors that sustain it. It presupposes that once conflict has occurred it lengthens and becomes challenging to restore peace on account of a number of factors such as ethnic pluralism and stereotyping, struggle for resources, structural factors, existence of expansive republic of hoodlums and the activities of criminal entrepreneurs among others.

1.8.3 Empirical Review

1.8.3.1 Ethnicity and Stereotyping as a Contributory factor to Mt Elgon Conflict

“Ethnicity” and “ethnic groups” means different things in different historical epochs, in various contexts and to various scholars. A very interesting account by Handleman (2013), defines ethnic identity as “a social construction – a way that certain groups have come to view themselves as distinct from others over time – rather than an inherent or primordial characteristic” p.78. It can also be seen as “a group of people united by a common error about their ancestry and a common dislike of their neighbors” (Handleman, 2013, p.79). Mugai (1995, p. 161) has
succinctly defined ethnicity as “the consciousness among people who share cultural and linguistic, sometimes kinship and religious, roots (and who conditionally affiliate for purposes of political action)”. Along the same lines, Nash, (1989) argues, “Ethnicity becomes a call to action” — and thus a source of conflict, “when such a group organizes for political and economic ends” such as an independent state, equal economic opportunity, or rights to religious expression (p. 127).

Thomson (2004: 62) posits that the term tribe is sometimes used to refer to “ethnic group” in Africa and notes that it is perceived negatively especially by the Africans themselves, due to its derogatory use by colonialists who attributed it to Africa’s “uncivilized” organization of society. Furthermore, “ethnic” is a value-laden and extremely ambiguous term; without further qualification, it conveys very little useful information about conflict (Chandra, 2006). Within the critical literature, ethnicity is normally divided into two different theories: primordialist and constructivism. From a primordialist perspective, an ever-expanding body of evidence points to the fact that, ethnicity is something that one is born into and that cannot be easily altered. The major architects include Geertz, (1963); Van den Berghe, (1981); Gurr and Harff,(1994); Haugeraud,(1995); Huntington, (1996); Ndegwa, (1997); Kimenyi, (1997); Kimenyi, (1998); Nasongo, (2000); Osamba, (2001); Collier, (2001); Atieno-Odhiambo, (2002); Omolo, (2002); Azam, (2002); Kariuki, (2004); Lynch, (2006); Yieke, (2007); and Robinson, (2009). These authors argue that the mere presence of ethnic diversity can cause conflict due to
insurmountable differences in values and civilization between the different cultures of the world. Fundamental to Collie’s (2001) work is the observation that the tribe and kin groups are the most powerful levels of social identity. Abukari (2005), writing in reference to the conflict in Northern Ghana, attributes much of the blame for violence in sub-Saharan countries to traditional tribal rivalry.

Ethnicity as a cause of conflict across the diverse Kenya’s tribal groups has been addressed in the available literature (Kimenyi and Mbaku 1993; Ndegwa, 1997; Kimenyi, 1998) who argue that since the violence is organized along ethnic lines; the inference is that ethnic clashes in Kenya have been purely the result of “ethnic hatred.” Their research findings match well with Mc Onyango (1995) and Brown (1996), who echo this assertion by noting that the driving force behind these conflicts, even if not violent, are the “ancient hatreds” that most ethnic groups have for each other. This work augments the earlier works in this literature such as Achebe, 1975; Zangari, 1976; Nyong’o, 1987; Ojwang, 1989; and Lunyigo, 1989. The above scholars point out that once the system is in place, it becomes self-perpetuating, increasing the likelihood of future conflicts by sharpening ethnic identity and chauvinism, as well as promoting the doctrine that a specific region of the country “belonged” to the groups that “originally” occupied them. This has led to terms such as “outsiders,” “foreigners,” “strangers” or “aliens,” (Ndegwa, 1997) evident in most parts of the country. Chege (2008) notes that ethnic variables
remain the predominant causes of the conflicts and thus cannot be ruled out as the major causative factor

The question of ethnic “outsiders” settling on “our” sacred ethnic homeland forms the backdrop to Gabrielle Lynch’s work on the politics of indigenousness in the Mt. Elgon region of Kenya (Lynch, 2011). By this reasoning, ethnicity has become the framework around which violence is pervasively organised for a variety of societal grievances. Siding with Lynch, Otieno et al., (2009) notes that the conflict serves as an example of ethnic rivalries transforming the nature of conflict from a localised issue into an identity-based conflict. These sentiments are closely shared by Mwasserah (2008) who observes that there has been concerted efforts “by the clans to alienate each other and clear the area of the other clans.” In the same vein, Weatherby (1962) notes that the Sabaot have over the years consistently been viewed as a war-like community of cattle rustlers by their neighbours.

On the contrary, a greater number of contributions in the ethnicity literature adopt an instrumentalist/constructivists approach with the belief that ethnic conflict predicated on primordial grounds is a “myth” (Crawford & Lipschultz, 1998). Leading constructionists, James Fearon and David Laitin instead view ethnicity as a fluid social construct and high levels of ethnic fragmentation are negatively correlated with violent conflict (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Consistent with this view is John Burton (1979); Lake and Rothschild (1996); Collier (1997); Collier (1999); Elbadawi and Sambanis, (2000); Osborne, (2000); Hegre et al., (2001); and
Gardener (2003). These scholars argue that ethnically divided nations have successfully lived together without giving rise to widespread bloodshed or forceful repression. Any potential fault lines between parties have been reengineered and tensions have been regulated. In addition, the larger the number of groups, even with shared grievances, the more difficult it will be to coordinate across differences to sustain widespread violence. Consequently, ethnic diversity helps rather than impedes the emergence of stable development as it necessitates and facilitates intergroup bargaining processes (Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2000).

In sustaining this argument, scholars such as Collier (1999) and Amutabi (1995) points out that in many instances, ethnic groupings reduce the risk of violent conflict perhaps because it encourages divergent groups to learn the skills of living together despite diversity. In addition, they point to the fact that historically, members of Kenya’s 40- plus ethnic groups have co-existed, traded and intermarried, often in a symbiotic relationship between pastoralist and agricultural communities (Lonsdale, 1992). Further, building on the constructivism approach, Makila (1986) and Kakai (2000) note that the communities in Mt Elgon share a lot in common making it difficult to imagine there being any ethnic group that can be defined as pure. The author argues that the Tachoni, Bukusu and the Sabaot share not only in some clans and linguistics aspects but also in their history of origin as well as their cultural and economic interests. This commonness makes value of interdependence a strong mechanism which aims at bringing about conflict
resolution. In an attempt to circumvent the causal dilemma of the protracted Mt Elgon conflict, Simiyu observes that “while the ethnic factor may have been dominant in explaining the conflicts of the 1990s in the Mount Elgon area (which pitted Sabaots against the other communities and notably the Bukusu), it has not been as dominant an explanatory factor in the latest conflict as the main combatants belong to the same ethnic community,” (2008).

“The fact that identity is fashioned – not given – does not, however, rob it of its evocative power; it is the very means of survival” (Waller, 1993). This view suggests that there is nothing inherently conflictual about ethnicity rather, under certain conditions; identity can turn from a relatively neutral organizing principle into a powerful tool for mobilizing mass violence. This study borrows the words of Ganguly, who notes that “a proper understanding of the causes of ethnic political mobilization and conflict is crucial, and we must move beyond simplistic discussions of ‘ancient hatreds’ to search for more systematic explanations.” Given the focus of this thesis, the above ethnicity literature helps provides an entry point in answering one of the main questions raised by the study as how far the issue of ethnic diversity and thus identity contributes to the conflicts in Mt Elgon?

1.8.3.2 Natural Resources as a Contributory factor to Mt Elgon Conflict
The question of whether natural resource depletion could be a condition behind much civil violence or ecological conflict, as it is often branded has been widely debated. Two large scale studies undertaken in the 1990’s led by Baechler and
Dixon attempted to establish an empirical evidence for the relationship between natural resource scarcity and violence (Dixon, 1994; Bachler, 1996). Other scholarly literature that has adopted the mono-causal, ecologically-focused explanation as a key factor in explaining contemporary conflict include (Hardi & Garrett, 1968; Gleick, 1991; Markakis, 1994; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Brauch 2002; Raleigh & Urdal, 2007). The authors acknowledge that there is a positive relationship between resource scarcity and conflict. They argue that depriving people off their livelihoods leaves them no choice apart from fighting for survival.

In the words of Markakis (1994), who writes in relation to resource-based conflict in the Horn of Africa that “scarcity and mobility make conflict inevitable” (1994). At the same time Nying’uro (2005) adds that the perennial intra- and inter-clan clashes among the Somali community in the north are actually “resource wars” to the extent that they are about pasture and water—which are very scarce in the arid and semi-arid northern districts. Land disputes are common in most rural areas in Kenya, especially in the most densely populated former White Highlands of the Rift Valley (Boone, 2012; Kanyinga, 2009b). Kanyinga (2000) and Klopp (2000) both observe that violence has resulted from elite’s appropriation of land issue to fight those opposed to them by reactivating demands for territorial land claims in Rift Valley and at the Coast areas of Kenya, sentiments shared by (Gatere, 1998).

Although Kenya’s land settlement programme was an integral part of independence package which provided an opportunity for Kenya to redress land problems. This
precipitated inequality where the rich acquired land indiscriminately at the expense of the landless. This usurpation of land violates constitutional provisions on equality (Yamano & Deininge, 2005). There is a vast amount of written materials that relates conflicts with resource use and allocation: Amisi, (1998); Brown, (2002); Rogge (1993); Ndung’u Report, (2004); Menkhaus, (2005); Kagunyu et al., (2007) and Mulu, (2008); all have common themes: Conflicts in Kenya are a result of increased competition for shrinking natural resources, particularly land. The authors argue that land is undoubtedly the most important natural resource that is held in trust for future generations (Gatheru, 2005).

A bulk of the literature has theorised and articulated what they view as causes of Mt Elgon conflict; notably, they all directly or indirectly attribute the conflict to the neoclassical economics paradigm of scarcity especially land. For instance, Médard Claire, (2008) asserts that repeated episodes of land allocations and then evictions, dictated by political favoritism, generated frustrations within the community which are now finding expression in fierce territorial claims by ethnic groups. In her analysis, Waithaka, (2013) noted that during the finalization of land allocations, some settled members of the Soy clan were forced to relocate and formed the Sabaot land Defence Force (SLDF). These arguments correspond to the observations made by (Obi, 1999; Nyadimo Eric, 2005, Noetic & Qualia, 2007; Siringi, 2007; Wakhungu J, Nyikuri E, Huggins E, 2008; Bauman, 2011) who attributes the causes of the Mt Elgon conflict to struggle for land resources.
Such reductionist understanding of the complex relationship between environment and conflict has been severely criticized on theoretical, methodological and empirical grounds, to cite a few examples: (Gleditsch, 1998; Dalby 2002; Barnett, 2001; Hagmann, 2005; Hagmann and Mulugeta 2008); who argue that clear evidence to support such claims is often lacking, resulting in a rather overly-simplistic and, some would argue, deeply flawed analysis—extending from an environmentally-deterministic view of expanding population growth, depletion of natural resources and inevitable ensuing conflict. At its most basic level, the conclusion of all these arguments is that scarcity itself does not trigger violence and argue that the relationship between population growth and the environment is mediated by consumption habits, and by the technologies used to extract natural resources and provide goods and services thus stimulating cooperation (Witsenburg & Adano, 2009).

Instead they adopt the “rentier state” argument, that resource abundance, rather than scarcity, is the bigger threat in causing conflict (Goldstone, 2001; Collier et al., 2003; Ross, 2004a; Huggins et al., 2005). Their thesis stipulates that civil wars are rooted in what they term greed, namely in a willingness to appropriate wealth by violent means. According to this view, to which rent-seeking activities influence the structure of the state and of the economy, favouring the emergence and continuation of conflict (Di John 2008,). In this case countries with abundant natural resources have experienced what has been coined the “resource curse”-
corruption, economic stagnation, and violent conflict over access to revenues (Aubert, 1963). These sentiments are echoed by (Ross, 2001; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Ross, 2004; Lujala et al., 2005; Humphreys, 2005, Hegre et al., 2009; Caruso, 2010a).

Yet, despite the extensive literature that has developed around the link between natural resources and civil conflict, no consensus has yet emerged. As regardless of which theory describes the bigger threat, both resource scarcity and abundance can create environments that are ripe for violent conflict. Ultimately, this study treats natural resources conflicts as an intrinsic part of larger social conflicts and seeks to complement both theories by ascertaining how natural resources and population pressure cause conflicts in the area. Furthermore, in a significant departure from much of the existing literature, this study takes a careful look at how natural resources and population pressure interact with other factors to cause and sustain the protracted conflicts in Mt Elgon.

1.8.3.3 Structural Factors as a Contributory factor in Mt Elgon Conflict
For some authors and experts, people actions and lives are shaped in large part by the social structures in which they find themselves (Maiese, 2003). Social systems and structures, often seriously eroded by years of violence, are less able to absorb and offer young people meaningful opportunities in life. In some cases, however, a society's social institutions are characterized by exploitation, political exclusion, and unequal access to resources (Ardon, 1999). Anthropologists have been
particularly successful at describing the contexts of marginalization, suffering and displacement that have constituted the grievances out of which many denigrated African insurgent groups have arisen. One of the most cited sources of inequality is poverty, where increased level of violence is attributed to high levels of poverty. Ted Robert Gurr argued that rebellions occur when a large discrepancy exists between people’s legitimate and actual levels of material reward (Gurr 1970). Additional authors and scholars with the same view are (Burton, 1979; Horowitz, 1985; Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; Ballentine and Sherman, 2003 Murshed and Gates, 2005; Ostby, 2008 and Maystadt, 2010). Human needs theory championed by Burton (ibid) argues that there are conflict and instability in developing countries because people are denied not only their biological needs, but also psychological needs that relate to growth and development.

In his view, Nyuot (2004) observed that amongst other factors responsible for violent conflict in Africa is colonialism. From a historical perspective, at pre-colonial times, land was communally owned, and traditional rights and obligations ensured direct access to all. Punitive rules that colonialists put in place were largely geared towards their having complete control over the indigenous communities and their resources. Colonialists assumed that all land to which private ownership could not be established by documentary evidence was ownerless (Okoth Ogendo, 1999). In Kenya, reports of various committees investigating the clashes are replete with incidences pointing to state complicity (National Council of Churches of Kenya
[NCCK] 1992, 2001). In terms of the case study, Kiliku (1992) probed the genesis and causes of ethnic and territorial conflicts among the Bukusu and the Sabaot and noted that these conflicts were politically motivated. By way of an example Simiyu (2008) points out that the conflict in Mount Elgon District is in many ways a culmination of a long history of the Sabaot community’s struggle against historical injustice in the form of colonial disinheritance of their ancestral land without compensation by either the colonial government or successive post-colonial governments. The area remains grossly underdeveloped in comparison with the neighbouring Bungoma District.

Of particular concern are large populations of unemployed youth, especially young men, to whom a lack of jobs is seen to lower the “opportunity cost” of (re-) participating in armed insurrection (Stewart, 2015). Econometric research into causes and drivers of conflict has posited that the presence of uneducated and unemployed, mostly male, youths presents a variable that heightens conflict risk (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). Some “youth bulge” theories put it more starkly, predicting that countries with a percentage of 40 percent or more young people of the overall population, combined with other factors, cross a “danger threshold” that makes it 2.5 times more likely that these societies will “tip over” into violence See for example (Cincotta, R. 2005).

In terms of the case study, pundits have commonly explained this malaise by focusing on the issue of Militarization; There is a strong correlation between large
unemployed youth cohorts and conflicts, where the youth view the theft, smuggling, and banditry that accompany violence as a source livelihood (Mueller, 2000; Esty et al, 2002; Yoroms, 2005; Omeje, K 2005, Mwaura, 2005, Kilonzo 2008).

In this way, the claims of injustice in the land allocation led to the formation of the SLDF, a rag tag militia group, comprising young men predominantly from the Soy clan led by Wycliffe Kirui Matakwei; to fight what they perceived as dispossessing of land considered theirs (Simiyu, 2008; UCDP database, 2016). Undoubtedly, this precipitated the formation of a counter-insurgency militia called the Moorland Defence Force (MDF).

The other point worth mentioning here as shared by Mburu, (2001); who bluntly states that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a major factor for the outbreak, continuation and intensification of most current violent conflicts. At the same time, Mkutu, (2008) and Pkalya et al., (2003) provide an interesting review of the militarization in Mt Elgon by noting that the area is at the center of three major international illegal arms and ammunitions trafficking. Arms proliferation from the conflict-ridden neighboring countries of the region has made cattle rustling a deadly and destructive practice. Most importantly, a cattle rustling has taken criminal and political dimensions and has emerged as a new system of predatory exploitation of the pastoral economic resources, manifesting itself in the form of banditry and political incitement (Pkalya et al., 2003).
Other critical scholars have argued that there are deep-rooted values associated with cattle rustling, among the pastoralist communities, raids and cattle rustling are undertaken to prove that young men are ready for manhood, as well as to acquire bride price (Mwaniki et al., 2007; Buchanan-Smith and Lind, 2005). At this stage, the young warriors have to become independent and self-sufficient; and are expected to fend for “themselves not through work, but by raiding other clans’ herds” (Saidi, 1992, p. 135). However, Omitoogun (2004) warns that in associating militarization and conflict, caution needs to be taken because rather than the proliferation of arms in the society, it is the welfare-reducing effects of militarisation that causes violence. Besides, when it is appreciated that developed countries with more sophisticated arms than Africa are not in conflict like the later, militarisation as an explanation becomes weak.

It is worth noting that most of the scholars who have acknowledged the importance of structural factors have tended to overcorrect for the determinism of the causes of conflict by constructing “kitchen sink” accounts that remain too underspecified or indeterminate. This study breaks away from such line of arguments to establish not only how structural factors contribute to the conflict, but also how they interact with other factors to cause and sustain the Mt Elgon Conflict.
1.8.4 Summary of Literature Review

It is clear from this overall picture that the Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) theoretical or conceptual mine-field, whose literature can hardly be exhausted in such a limited study in terms of review. Several schools of thought and studies share different opinions that have helped throw more light on the subject under study as they underscore the magnitude of protracted conflicts. In my view the authors’ analysis on the causes of the protracted violent conflict has been quite interesting and insightful in examining the study research questions. However, there is an apparent imbalance in much of the existing literature, which tends to place great emphasis on the “tyranny of the single-cause” in the explanation of the causes of the conflict. The theoretical basis of such knowledge is quite limited in the sense that it does not offer much by way of general explanation of the phenomenon of armed conflict; this is, perhaps, hardly surprising, given its complexity and diversity. Given these deficiencies, there is need for further thorough in-depth research to disaggregate and re-conceptualise the causes of violent conflict in the area. It is this largely unexplored or overlooked aspect of the conflicts that this study transcends the ‘tyranny of the single-cause’ and adopts a multi-causal approach in analysing the factors behind the protracted conflicts in Kenya, in the context of Mt Elgon conflict. In contrast to traditionally posed questions of “what the causes of armed conflicts are”, this study asks: “what are the factors that
contribute to protracted armed conflicts, specifically how these factors reinstate each other, relate, interact and sustain the conflict.”

1.9 Research Methodology and Design

The question to pose here is: *how was the research conducted?* This section answers this question by presenting the research design and the main study methodological considerations. In this respect, the study generated data from both primary and secondary sources.

1.9.1 Data Sources

1.9.1.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data formed a substantial source of material for this study. The study relied on books, journals, institutional documents, Internet sources, newspapers and other news agencies; more importantly are the records, relevant reports and documents related to the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) hearings in Mt Elgon. This was necessary in order to get a first-cut understanding of the historical perspectives of the protracted conflict and debates relevant to the situation of the protracted Mt Elgon conflict. Again, on this account and in view of the enormous factors behind the protracted conflict, a systematic and comprehensive review of literature was instrumental in establishing the key variables relevant to the situation in Mt Elgon. In the process of identifying the key
variables, theoretical questions have been raised in order to clarify concepts regarding the key factors and how they cause and sustain the protracted conflict.

The study also relied on secondary sources to reconstruct the historical context of the conflict; a very critical process in locating the protracted Mt Elgon conflict question at the Centre of this investigation and analysis and to understand what informed the local views on the causes of the conflict. This process was based on the study assumption that understanding the history of the conflict in Mt Elgon is connected to understanding the nature, extent and social dynamics of the conflict. The point here is that the protracted conflict is related to multiple factors, and as a social phenomenon they are inevitably shaped by socio-economic and historical developments. Thus, the protracted conflict has a social, economic and political character and therefore to interrogate its causes, it is necessary to understand the social dynamics of the conflict. In addition, insights from these sources were corroborated through additional research to confirm or qualify the preliminary insights gleaned from the first reading of the primary and secondary texts.

1.9.1.2 Primary Data
Primary data constituted a vital component in answering the questions set forward in the study. Since the research was based on the hypothesis that, it is not enough simply to look at the single factors that cause the conflict rather, instead it is necessarily important to carefully analyse the different factors that are at work in the conflict and the ways in which they combine to cause and sustain the protracted
conflict; the primary data gathered through field research were important in testing this assumption. The study, therefore, employed a multi-step proves in not only gathering primary information from the experts, key informants and local population’s views, perceptions and accounts regarding the protracted conflict by heavily relying on the semi structured in-depth interviews and focused group discussions (FGD) but also sought to find commonalities between these narratives and experiences. Within the broad spectrum of data collection activities, the process was guided by the questions: “Who is speaking? For what purpose are they speaking, and under what circumstances?” (Bennet et al., 2005). The intention of the field research was to gather information about their understanding of the causes of the protracted conflict and the motivations driving it.

1.9.2 Research Design

Unquestionably, there has been a marked shift towards quantitative methods and methodologies (Bennet et al., 2005) and in the cases of some research projects, a mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Tomforde, 2005) has been adopted. This study follows a predominately qualitative methodology. In utilizing this approach, a fundamental critique of the quantitative methodology is that it does not “capture the real meaning of social behavior”, and it gives a solid statistical account of particular issues causing the conflict (Fortna, 2008). On the contrary, qualitative approach involves the exploration of a topic or issue in depth, with emphasis on seeking information from actors who are experiencing or are involved
in the issue (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2003). To reiterate, the qualitative approach offers a greater depth to understanding the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it.

More particularly, is that the study was based on a **phenomenological study design**. In this regard, the study was guided by the principle that an action can be best understood when observed in the setting in which it occurs. As such, given the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon as presented in chapter 2, it is important to point out here that the phenomenological study design was appropriate since it would help in understanding the meaning of events, contextual situation of the conflict and interactions of ordinary people caught up in the conflict. Description consists of “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). This meant that the thesis prioritised how people understood the conflict, why the conflict has lasted for so long and its causes. Again, at this point, it has to be stressed that, in a phenomenological approach, a researcher seeks to gain entry into the conceptual world of their subjects in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1996).

In doing so, phenomenologist believe that there is a multiplicity of ways of interpreting experiences. This can be realized through interacting with others during which we get insight into the meaning of experience that constitutes reality (Bogdan & Biklen, 1996). The method is based on the understanding that reality is
socially constructed so that the meaning people give to their experiences and their process of interpretation are essential and constitutive. To understand behaviour, we must understand definitions and the processes by which they are manufactured (Bogdan & Biklen, 1996).

Still on phenomenological study design, it is noteworthy that human beings are actively engaged in creating their world. People act, not on the basis of predetermined responses to predefined objects, but rather as interpreters, definers, signalers, symbol and signal readers. In addition, whenever possible, in understanding people’s attitudes, views and behaviour, the researcher needs to enter into a defining process through methods such as participant observation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1996). The approach therefore was qualitative in nature in the sense that it aimed to understand perceptions constructed by respondents.

In qualitative research, the researcher seeks to grasp how, when and under what circumstances an event occurred (Bogdan & Biklen, 1996). For this reason, the study set out to capture what those interviewed said or did not and how they interpret the questions raised during discussions. Based on this methodological underpinning, the study sought to capture this process of interpretation through an understanding of the feelings, motives and thoughts of respondents with regard to the protracted nature of conflict in Mt Elgon and motivations driving it. Through the semi-structured interviews and FGDs, the study probed into the various issues
that influenced feelings and perceptions of the people of Mt Elgon about the causes of conflict.

Overall, the qualitative approach was not only preferable in capturing the complexity and context of the conflict in Mt Elgon but also appropriate in stressing the personal experiences in order to understand the intersection and deeper meaning that the people of Mt Elgon attached to the various factors responsible for causing and sustaining the conflict in the area.

1.9.3 The Target Population

The inclusion criteria for interviews were purposely broad, as I wanted the sample to encompass the full range of ages, gender, marital status, education levels, etc. Specifically, the study sought opinions of individuals in terms of the conflict, identified either with clan, sub tribe or tribe, but also with citizens who distanced themselves from either actors, yet, at the same time, were affected by it either as victims of the violence (a direct and personal experience), or because they could not distance themselves from the protracted conflict as residents of the region within whose borders the violence took place. Other characteristics included: Government officials or civil society actors directly dealing with the protracted conflicts and their resolution/ management in the area; civil society activists who are active in advocacy of peace and human rights issues; study experts, based on
their knowledge of protracted conflicts and previous experience of participation in conflict transformation in general.

This categorization was advantageous because it allowed for inclusiveness as far as the different categories of people within the study area are concerned and easily understand the various patterns of thinking about the nature and characteristics of the protracted Mt Elgon conflict. Accordingly, various broad groups of actors formed the populations from which the sample was drawn: community leaders; civil society activists, including women and youth; government administrators; and study experts. I also held brief discussions on the phone and via email with some PhD student friends who have done similar research. It must however be emphasized that it was difficult to draw a clear distinction between the various groups caught up in the conflict. For instance, it was difficult to draw distinction between victims and perpetrators or ex-combatants, as it emerged that some of the perpetrators were initially victims of abductions by SLDF and other militia gangs in the area.

Finally, this being a qualitative study, the selection of interviewees was based on **purposive sampling**, which is an appropriate method when studying such socially complex phenomena. I also adopted **convenience sampling** and **snow-ball technique** where I asked interviewees to suggest individuals whom I should also interview. In terms of figures, I conducted 50 information rich interviews; though the actual number of individual respondents is higher because I conducted some
group interviews in addition to three FGDs. Given the overlapping nature of the respondents, I have not given the numerical representation of each respondent group, as this would not be accurate. In that sense, the sample is not broadly representative of perceptions across the study area; it does aim, however, to provide insights, lessons and points of reflection from these discussions.

Ultimately, I interviewed an equal number of married men and women. As provided by David and Sutton (2004), there is no clear-cut answer with regard to the correct sample size, as sampling often depends on the research purpose and the nature of the population subject to investigation (degree of heterogeneity).

1.9.4 Interviews

This study relied on semi-structured open-ended question design. I collected the study data through sustained contact with people in their own settings such as homes, farms and the market place. In this respect, I employed in-depth Semi Structured Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and some degree of non-participant’s observation. This involved spending time with the subjects and asking open-ended questions. Although the decision on open-ended questions was informed by the nature of my research, it was also determined by the general agreement that some respondents, especially elites “prefer not to be asked closed-ended questions” (Aberbach and Rockman 2002) as they prefer to explain what they mean in their own terms as opposed to try to fit in the researcher’s terms
The semi-structured nature of the interviews helped me to cover the salient issues for all respondents as well as permit flexibility for interviewees to respond in a unique way. This way, I was able to direct the interview, but at the same time adopt the inquiry by probing interesting responses for clarifications and elaborations (Bauer and Gaskell 2000).

The study was well aware of some shortcomings of the semi-structured open-ended question design. George Spindler calls such endeavour “how to get people to tell you what they don’t know” (2002, p. 13). Although some respondents might misrepresent their positions, which raise reliability concerns (George & Bennett, 2005). I therefore had to place greater reliance on creativity in asking questions and cross-checking information.

A further remedy to avoid such bias of respondents, as well as other sources of primary data, was the four questions that should frequently be asked by researchers which are: “Who is speaking? Who are they speaking to? For what purpose are they speaking, and under what circumstances?” (George & Bennett, 2005). I made use of this observation during interviews. Furthermore, skills gained from my previous work and research experience were also employed and proved to be very useful.

In terms of the FGD, conversations were generally free form when engaging with the elders and community members in the group setting. Those with opinions or information presented their views, while others played the role of adding,
clarifying, purifying, or backing-up the former. Where necessary, and where a
clearer view was needed, the researcher interjected to seek more clarification. The
hypothetical situations that helped in elucidating their conception or perception of
the conflict and to expand on certain points and guide the conversation was also
employed. Apart from being time and cost effective, group interviews allow
interaction of individuals’ views within the group (Bryman, 2012). Worth noting is
that the goal of the FGD was less about establishing the hard facts of the protracted
conflict situation, which had largely been learned from secondary sources – and
more about understanding it from the perspectives of Mt Elgon residents.

The non-participant observation technique was an ongoing research activity
throughout the fieldwork phase and was adopted in recording patterns of inter-
communal interactions with a view to establishing how they facilitated the
protracted conflicts. Preference was given to the non-participant observation
technique because it offered the researcher an on-the-spot opportunity to observe
patterns of inter-communal interactions without actively involving in the events
being observed. In this regard, I not only attended public meetings/barazas but also
frequented places which served as frequent meeting points such as the watering
points to capture the views of women or simply hanging around on the roads, bus
stage, visiting towns and market places where communities engaged in commercial
transactions and transportation of people and goods especially on market days.
While doing this, I would, where appropriate, initiate informal discussions with
people I encountered on informal basis; during which; voice tonality, body language and other non-verbal cues which show respondents’ emotion to the research according to Marschan-Piekkar and Welch (2004, pg. 20) were noted.

Towards the end of several interviews, respondents suggested possible people I should speak with and in some cases provided me with mobile numbers to easily locate and reach the subject via a phone call. Facts gathered from non-participant observation were then complemented with results of interviews and FGD in order to present a robust analysis of the relevant issues being studied. Using multiple sources served an additional purpose, which was correcting and checking on possible biases of different sources of information (Tansey, 2007).

The majority of the study interviews lasted for 30 minutes to 1 hour for each interview. At community level, the study was conducted in selected villages including: Kamachai, Kapkateny, Chepkurukur, Soet, Masahek, Makutano, Cheptoror, Cheptonon, Lukhome, Chepkurukur, Chewango and Kaptaboi village where, as earlier highlighted, I engaged community leaders; civil society activists, including women and youth; government administrators who deemed knowledgeable and insightful about the protracted conflict in the area. I also made a concerted effort to talk to and interview the neighbors of Mt Elgon in areas of Chwele, Kimilili and Kitale towns so that they could give their side of the story. This is based on the fact that there are people from Mt Elgon who were displaced.
had migrated to these neighbouring towns and therefore easy to access and whose views were important.

Lastly, I held informal “conversational” interviews with peace and conflict study experts on the sidelines of the numerous conferences I have attended and presented research papers including the 2nd International Conference on Democratic Governance, hosted by the Rwanda Governance Board in Kigali from June 29th - 2nd July, 2014; the Government development strategies in the pastoral areas conference hosted by Addis Ababa University Institute for Peace and Security Studies in Addis Ababa from 17th-18th October 2014; the International Conference on Social Protection hosted by the Poverty Eradication Department in the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Tanzania, with support of UNICEF, ILO and the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) from December 15th-17th, 2014; the African-centered Solutions for Peace and Security (Afsol) workshop, by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) -Addis Ababa University-Ethiopia from 6th -7th March 2015; the International Conference on Social Media for Good (14-16 May 2015, Istanbul). The discussions occurred before the workshops formerly started, or as I always arrived early in order to mingle, during breaks, as well as the meetings wrapped up. On the whole, this field research lasted for a staggered period of 3 years from December 2013 to December 2016.

There was no pre-arranged order of the research exercise. An important aspect to highlight is that the actual field work and data collection was preceded by a rapid
assessment in the proposed study sites in the form of semi-structured interviews with a number of selected respondents. With the support of the study supervisor, this assessment informed the revision of the research design and helped in correcting any design and conceptual mistakes early in the research. During the actual research, the required research objective and type of information that I needed informed the basis upon which the selection of participants was founded. Accordingly, participants were selected according to the kind of information that was being sought. For most community interviews, my contact person would identify them and approach them beforehand to ask about their willingness and availability to participate in an interview. Before beginning an interview, I made a general introduction upon meeting the respondents.

As part of the introduction, I thanked the respondents for offering their valuable time, and then introduced myself, where I came from, the nature and purpose of my research. This was geared towards making the respondents informed as fully as possible about the aims and possible implications of the research. After briefing them about the purpose of my research and confirming their interest, I asked the participant(s) if they would be free to participate in the research. This was to ensure that respondents were not coerced into participating in the research.

After receiving their initial consent to participate in the research, a specific date and time of the interview was identified for each respondent. I developed a list of the potential respondents with their contacts and an agreed schedule of meetings to
make sure that the targeted number of respondent was secured and to remind them prior to the meeting. Furthermore, I made an additional list of potential key informants, more than the required number. This was to serve as a reserve list, in case any of the potential respondents could not make her/himself available or change his/her mind to participate, which I found very useful.

I also found that transparency throughout the interview process was important to avoid any confusion. Therefore, before the interview, I set out clearly what my study was about, what the interview would entail including that I would like to take notes and record the interview if the interviewee would allow me, and how long the interview would last (about 30 minutes). I also asked the respondents whether they would wish to remain anonymous or allow their identities to be revealed. This was to protect respondents’ identity and avoid revealing confidential matters. In addition, information about the research and the researcher together with a written “consent form” (all attached to the appendix) were usually provided for each respondent (a further account in this respect is be provided below when elaborating on ethical considerations).

The introductory process was quite significant because it enabled me to build a rapport in an environment in which I would possibly be treated with suspicion. Respondents developed confidence in me. Some interviews were, however, conducted without formal introduction as participants seemed more concerned with saving time or such cases where I met a respondent in a bus terminus, streets or at
the water point. Of noteworthy is the fact that obtaining informed consent during the non-participant observation activities especially at public meetings/barazas was different from what I had originally planned for. I had planned to follow a careful process characterized by adequate lead-time, opportunity for potential participants to discuss, ask questions and consider their participation in the study, full disclosure of research study purposes, objectives, methods and anticipated outcome as well as the right to withdraw at any time, and without any penalty from the study. In the end, my attendance and participation at public meetings occurred as a result of being invited by the organizers or other key players.

For instance, while I was given the opportunity to introduce myself and my research at one of the youth workshop on developing nonviolence strategies, I was told that it was not necessary or appropriate to seek the signatures of each of the people in attendance. At the same time, when a local administrator for a public baraza invited me, I was told that they were public meetings, which I was freely welcome to attend. I understood that it was not appropriate to try and seek permission for the other participants at these events; however, I did make a point of introducing myself to as many people as possible and to explain my research and why I was interested in observing the meeting proceedings.

Such introductions occurred before the meetings formerly started as I always arrived early in order to mingle, as well as the meetings wrapped up. These public
meetings represented my first opportunity to meet and connect with different actors. As such, I was able to directly gain informed consent during my participation in small-group/breakout sessions by taking a few minutes at the start to provide the details of the study. This also allowed me to ask permission to use my observations in the study.

1.9.5 Study Limitations

Embedded in the unique spaces of protracted conflict are particular sets of issues that face researchers. These particularities present a rich but difficult terrain of inquiry for scholars attempting to navigate these intractable conflicts. In this regard, the study anticipated difficulties in accessing and getting respondents to speak, since the area remains fragile; characterized by suspicion and distrust towards strangers. Frankly, one such issue I encountered was the problem of non-response as some respondents politely refused or otherwise avoided signing the consent form after reading the exact nature of the study. I later discovered that the people did not trust me since they were not aware of who I was, what my intention was or whether I was a government security spy.

What helped me out of these difficulties was my entry point, namely my longtime friend (a clinical officer in the area) who served as my contact person. His assistance played a critical role in my gaining access to some high-level participants because of local customs and the formal protocol to be observed when seeking an
audience with government officials. This method of entering the community areas worked exceedingly well across the study area to the extent that I had close to a 100% acceptance rate amongst identified participants.

In terms of language skills, prior knowledge of the local languages being used in interviews was not without its challenges. I am fluent in kibukusu and also some basic skills in ki-sabaot. These are the languages widely spoken in the area. Upon meeting with the Saboat respondents, I spoke the familiar “chamake-yemne” or “amite-imite,” greetings and in some cases I tried to speak a few more phrases. This seemed to be appreciated by the people I met. Another aspect that helped me collect the data was walking during the non-participant observation, where I personally came to learn that they are welcoming to outsiders, open to long discussions and detail-oriented with their descriptions. For example, walking together with the women to the watering point or to the market was appreciated by the local community and helped to build rapport. This made it easy for the rest of the people to develop trust in me and set an atmosphere that lent itself to productive data collection.

Again, there was a certain element of mistrust people had in speaking with a voice recorder turned on. To facilitate an environment where people could speak freely; I found the notebook to be more user friendly, particularly when discussing conflict. Furthermore, the lack of electricity in the field made it difficult to use any power-aided technology such as recorders and laptops. Closely related to this point is the
sensitivity of signing the consent forms, which some respondents were very reluctant to accept; perhaps either because they were not familiar with, which was the justification mostly mentioned. In this regard, I assured them of the confidentiality and the anonymity of the information since they were not included on the list of the interviewees.

In addition, due to grievance and antagonism of communities towards each other, most of the respondents took sides and adopted entrenched positions in favour of their community. Therefore, I had to take care to verify the authenticity of claims by the informants. Besides, the supporters of different communities had their own history about the origin and evolution of the protracted conflict. This sometimes made them to present information from a prejudiced perspective.

It was also evident that some informants were either deliberately concealing information or making claims, which could not be substantiated, which therefore necessitated the need to crosscheck information from other key informants and secondary sources. This challenge was mostly experienced with government officials, who often focused on giving the government’s position as opposed to their own views or how the issue has evolved. For instance, some easily dismissed questions presence of militia gangs as a non-issue. In such cases, I realised that probing would have likely annoyed the bureaucrats, and so I complemented their responses with responses from non-government interviewees, most of who were at
ease to talk about sensitive militarization issues and how they contribute to the protracted nature of the conflict in the area.

Another challenge was the large-group format of the FGDs, which at first was very insightful because of the way that it allowed the researcher to observe group reactions to the contributions of individual members. However, the same also dissuaded many community members from speaking and so the men sometimes dominated the conversation. In other cases, when individuals did speak, the audience sometimes influenced them. This entails a weak point in this study, nevertheless, every effort was made to ensure that the study was conducted appropriately, and adequate data generated to respond to the study objectives.

1.9.6 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the commencement of this study ethics approval was sought from the Kenya National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) under the close guidance of my research supervisors and in line with the code of research ethics as stipulated by Kenyatta University.

For instance, in order to respect privacy of a respondent, anonymity was maintained when required by a particular respondent or where an issue talked about was sensitive. Indeed, every time a respondent made a statement that I considered sensitive, I sought to confirm from the respondent whether he or she would wish to be quoted by real names. Since the information I collected from the field were
meant for thesis writing which eventually would be in the public domain, the most
effective way of keeping confidentiality was through letting sources of information
to remain anonymous. I promised that I would never reveal, whatsoever, the
identity of participants who sought anonymity.

In the course of the interviews, I was very careful about asking direct questions,
which would bring about emotional harm. If there was sensitive information, I only
asked a general question and let the participant volunteer such information. I also
adopted a kind of interactive process by engaging participants in open discussions.
In most cases, I adopted a more fluid discussion with respondents to build
confidence among the respondents towards me and about the issue being discussed.
For example, during the youth workshop, I was told that they appreciated my
attendance and interest. I also experienced some youths asking for my opinion or
input on some issues such as employment. This approach was necessary to allow
hidden information to be drawn to the surface. Overall, people seemed generally
keen and open to my research activities, and candidly shared their perspectives and
experiences in helpful ways.

General questions proved to be important for they enabled free flowing interview
which was instrumental in getting a general understanding of a range of
perspectives on a topic. It is after this that in-depth interviews were pursued in order
to get focused on particular topics that emerged during the preliminary interviews.
I did this by spending considerable time on general questions addressed by a range of respondents. Then, I would take the following say, two weeks getting into a follow-up in-depth interview on specific issues. In certain cases, especially for the expert interviews, I did not raise questions beyond the introductory statement; instead I let respondents to speak on areas that were of interest to them or those in which they were knowledgeable. After this, I explored issues more deeply in the course of the discussion by singling out pertinent issues mentioned by the respondents. In this sense, the respondents played a significant role in defining the content and shaping the direction of the interview. Since I was so much concerned about generating respondents’ perspective and how they constructed meaning of the protracted conflicts, I set them to talk freely about their points of view. I only intervened to ask for clarification when a respondent mentioned something that required a follow-up. To follow-up on emerging issues, I used phrases such as “could you please explain that” or asked, “Could you please give an example”.

Since the situation in Mt Elgon would most likely elicit an interviewer’s feelings, I did not escape being emotionally touched by the devastating humanitarian conditions that prevailed in Mt Elgon. I sought not to suppress my feelings, but instead transformed them as aid in my research. I empathized with them in relation to the situation so as to build rapport with respondents. The feelings also enabled me to reflect on the respondents’ circumstance which enabled me to generate
meaning and insight into the concrete situation of Mt Elgon. In the process I became part of the group and grasped issues from the people’s standpoint.

### 1.9.7 Data Analysis

A common challenge in research and one shared in this study concerns managing and making sense of the sheer quantity of data collected – not only in terms of interviews, literature review and observation, but also in terms of the extensive field notes and other process notes generated during field-work and analyses phases. Bernard (1994:452) defines analysis of qualitative data as “the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place.”

In this regard, the study analysis is guided by the grounded theory approach (Glaser, 1992). Hailed as the “market leader” in qualitative research analysis (McLeod, 1998); grounded theory is where the inquirer generates a general explanation of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Consequently, the method of analysis was both deductive and inductive and aimed to describe, analyse and explain. Thus, although secondary and interview data helped me describe the protracted conflict in a structured way, I also employed a constructivist approach that treated interview data not simply as “representations of the world”, but as “part of the world they describe” (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:107 in Silveman 2001:95).
In order to facilitate proper management of data, I used the NVivo software for storing and structuring textual data from interviews. First, I took time to familiarize myself thoroughly with the data by typing up the field notes; re-reading the complete set of the field notes by highlighting key sections; writing brief summaries for each interview; and coding of the data to single out “emerging themes”. This initial analysis was then followed by a second level of analysis shortly after expert interviews. This second level of analysis enabled me to revise some of the earlier broad themes as well as introduce new ones emerging from the data. It was also at this stage that I compared interview statements with data from document review to ensure a more accurate picture of the protracted conflict in the study area. I used both documented data and interview data to create a coherent body of meaning, to form the structure and key arguments found in this thesis. Throughout the analysis, I looked out for unusual or unexpected findings that would point to a different way of thinking about the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it.

For enhanced rigor and in order to present an accurate picture, I shared the study draft report with two external researchers who are working in Mt Elgon and asked them to review the information to see if they agreed with the materials and resulting findings. In strict confidentiality, these researchers reviewed the draft and made comments, which I have taken into consideration in preparing the final report. The study has benefited from critique and insights from Kenyatta University history
department and graduate school. I presented the study proposal at departmental level and later successfully defended it study before a board of examiners convened by the graduate school. These two presentations provided important critique and insights that greatly enriched the analysis and the findings presented in this thesis.

1.10 Chapters Outline

Chapter 1 provides information on main theme, its objectives, significance and justification for the research problem, Scope and delimitation, theoretical framework and methodological justification. It ends with overview of chapter outline of the whole thesis.

Chapter 2 develops on the premise of building a holistic understanding of protracted conflict and all its vast complexities. It introduces and discusses complex Mt Elgon’s cultural, political, and socio-economic history from pre-colonial period to date

Chapter 3 covers field findings on the study questions. Chapter 4 reflects upon and makes use of the theories and analytical frameworks discussed within to provide study findings on how the key constructs of ethnicity, natural resources and structural factors created have sustained the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon. Chapter 5 offers an overall thesis summation and sheds light on extent to which the thesis was able to address the main research questions. It also presents recommendations for appropriate conflict transformation.
CHAPTER TWO: TRAJECTORY OF MT ELGON CONFLICT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

One guiding question we need to ask from the outset is: Do we really need to explore the very distant past to understand the nature and character of the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it? Precisely, this study posits that, sometimes due to historical connectedness of events, the present may not be fully comprehended unless the past is brought into perspective. By the same token, it may also be impossible to divorce completely the future from both the present and the past. Locating the link between the past, present and future becomes even more relevant when one wishes to analyse a current event, which in reality is a culmination of preceding historical state of affairs. Essentially, this chapter responds to the supposition that, “violence must be understood in its context” (Titley, 1997). In line with these suppositions, this chapter offers a synoptic presentation of the trajectory of violence in Mt Elgon by bringing into perspective the causal and factual links between Mt Elgon’s previous historical, socio-political background and the 2006–2008 violent conflict.

Before delving into the history of Mt. Elgon, this chapter begins by first seeking to understand the geographic locale of the study area and the ethnic underpinnings of the people of Mt Elgon, by focusing on their sociological formation and social economic aspects of their lives. This approach is particularly crucial since the
intention is, *inter alia*, is to understand the parties in the conflict and their interests. The sociological formation and social economic aspects of their lives in turn plays a fundamental role for the rest of the study, as it prepares the ground for a better understanding of the nature and character of the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it. Although contemporaneous events might have triggered the escalation of conflicts into a violent phase, there are frequently underlying causes that have a long history, often reaching far into the colonial epoch.

### 2.2 Mt Elgon: Geographic Location, Ethnic and Tribal Composition

The Mt Elgon area borders Uganda in the north and west, Trans Nzoia to the east and Bungoma to the south. It lies between latitude 0° 48′, and 1° 30′ North and Longitudes 34° 22′ and 35° 10′ east. In terms of landmass, the area occupies a total area of 936.75km² with Mt. Elgon forest covering 609.6km² (see appendixes for the Geographical map). The area is further separated into three geographical sectors: the lowlands, the moorlands /highlands with a government protected forest in between (Simiyu, 2008). The lowlands are at the foothills of the mountain in an area called Chepyuk. The moorlands comprise of an area known as Chepkitale (Lynch & Gabrielle, 2011). The local topography is dominated by alternating hills and valley bottoms. Soils are developed on tertiary basic igneous rocks and volcanic ashes, and are fertile (Ongugo *et al.*, 2001). It is also to be noted that, Mt Elgon is an important water catchment area for River Nzoia, which flows into Lake Victoria, and for the Turkwel River, which flows into Lake Turkana (Hitimana, *et al.*, 2004).
Administratively, previously the area was divided into two districts: Mt Elgon district and Cheptais district. Mt. Elgon district consisted of Kapsokwony and Kaptama divisions while Cheptais district consisted of Kopsiro, and Cheptais divisions. Politically, Mount Elgon is represented in parliament as one constituency; part of Bungoma county with 13 wards. Like many other areas, livelihoods in Mt Elgon have been greatly affected by regional, national, and international influences (Catley, Lind and Scoones 2013). The area’s economic activities involve various forms of trade that concentrate around the major centers of Kapsokwony, Cheptais and Kaptama, as well as in the neighbouring Chwele and Kimilili in Bungoma County, and Kitale town in Tranzoia County. Chwele market, in particular, is the most important outlet for agricultural produce, as the bulk of Agricultural commodities traded come from Mt Elgon.

The appropriate question to confront at this point is: who are the people inhabiting Mt Elgon? This question is further reinforced when one pays attention to the ethnic composition of Mt Elgon; it is safe to say that there is little agreement on the exact structure of the tribes, clans, and sub clans in particular, with even local residents themselves disputing clan structures and affiliations as seen in the next chapter on study findings. Available literature suggests that Mt Elgon is multi-ethnic yet dominated by the Sabaot sub-tribe community who are part of the Kalenjin ethnic
group (Murdock, 1959; Tucker et al., 1962; Goldschmidt, 1976). Minority groups such as the Bukusu and the Iteso also exist in Mt Elgon (Were, 1967a; 1967b) The minority groups do not necessarily have a historical link with the region but simply migrated into the region and mostly live in association and various stages of assimilation with other inhabitants (Howard, 1991; TJRC, 2013). All these communities have equally performed an important role in informing the protracted conflict that has been witnessed in the area. It is therefore important at this point to give a brief account of each of the major communities of the Sabaot and Bukusus.

2.2.1 The Sabaot People

The term Sabaot came about in the late 1940s as a way for the Soy and Mosop clans to identify themselves as the Kalenjin speaking people of Mt. Elgon (Lynch, 2006). An early first written reference to the term ‘Sabaot’ dates back to 1949 when a local District Commissioner mentioned that local ‘Nandi-speaking people’ “now call themselves Sabaot” (Lynch, 2011). There are those of the view that the Kapchorwa Declaration crafted the Sabaot identity in 1962 for all the Kalenjin speaking tribes living on the Mt. Elgon slopes (Tucker and Bryan, 1962). The name Kalenjin refers to a group of Nilotic people occupying the highlands on the western part of the Rift Valley. The people clustered under this identity include the Nandi, Kipsigis, Tugen, Pokot, Marakwet, Elgeyo and the Sabaot people on the Kenyan side and the Sebei in Uganda. This name has since been taken over in the field of African linguistics
as a useful label to cover an entire language group (Huntingford, 1953; Kipkorir, 1969; Mwanzi, 1976).

The clans that constitute the modern Sabaot are well documented in historical text, in the sense that the Sabaot are further divided into two clans: the Soy clan (also called the Semek); which consists of the Bok Kony, Bongomek and Sapiny sub-clans (Goldschmidt, 1976) and the minority Mosop clan which consists of the Ogiek and Ndorobo sub-clans (Kapsoot, et al., 2011). Curious is the unique clan or sub-clan names, it is to be noted that significant changes brought about by the colonial alienation of land was the effort made by the colonial authorities to impose “tribal” labels on the different groups living in the area in an attempt to comprehend and consequently control the local population.

For instance, the Mosop and the Soy take their names from the relatively geographical elevations of the areas in which they settled. The two groups were separated by a thick forest reserve between the moorlands and lowlands. This separation was the result of the colonial land policy of alienating African land to create room for the white settler farms. The imposition of clear “tribal” labels on large categories of people had a strong “socially reifying” effect on these groups. In many cases, they became official names and the group members started using them in their self-identification. It is important; however, to note that in some case,
actual names of the groups were simply labels used by the colonial administration and were rarely ever used by the Mt Elgon groups (Medard, 2010; Lynch, 2011).

Over time, the geographic locations created different social identities for the Mosop and the Soy, based on different lifestyles borne out of environmental interaction and adaptation, despite their similarity in language, culture and ancestry. The thick forest reserve (at an altitude of 1800 to 2700 metres) separated the two groups and somewhat constrained social interaction between their members. To survive in this unpredictable habitat, the Mosop adopted a pastoral lifestyle by keeping livestock and derived a significant part of their nutritional needs from the milk and blood of the animals. They also practiced foraging in the forest. The Soy practiced agro-pastoralism. The Mosop rarely travelled down-slope, and mostly did so only during times of hunger and starvation. They were skilled weavers of basketry products from bamboo, which they brought with them for barter trade in exchange for cereals like maize, millet and potatoes (Simiyu, 2008). However, with the passage of time, the Soy and Mosop have adapted and employed new methods to sustain their livelihoods other than farming and hunting and gathering although agriculture still remains a large part of their economy (Medard, 2008).

2.2.2 The Bukusu People

The Bukusu are one of the seventeen sub-ethnic groups of the Luhya Bantu speakers and cultural group of East Africa. They refer to themselves as BouBukusu.
The Bukusu form the largest single ethnic unit among the Luhya nation, making 30% of the whole Luhya population. The Bukusu migrated together with other Luhya groups into Kenya through Uganda (Were, 1967). Together with other Luhya sub tribes, the Bukusu are thought to have first settled around the foothills of Mount Elgon. It was at this area that the Bukusu came in contact with the Sabaot, Nandi and Maasai among other warrior like groups who frequently raided the Bukusu. Previous literature indicates that due to differences in cultural and socio-economic activities, there were occasional violent conflicts between some of these communities, with cattle rustling being a major contributing factor. To secure themselves, Bukusu and other Luhya neighbours were forced to build fortified villages to ward off the attacks of the Sabaot people. The first fortified/walled villages were built at a place called Silikwa or sometimes called Sirikwa (Were, 1967a; 1967b; Wolfe, 1969; Goldschmidt, 1976; Makila, 1982; 1986; Aseka, 1989; Kiliku, 1992; NCCK, 1994; Kakai, 2000; Wafula, 2000; Ngulutu, 2013).

Following repeated attacks and unfavorable weather conditions, the Bukusu oral traditions has it that, a council of elders was held at Silikwa and it was resolved that the Bukusu migrate south and east, where spies are said to have reported large, unsettled lands. However, a section of the population was reluctant to move and stayed behind when the main ethnic group moved (Baker, 1975). Those who stayed behind are said to have become the Ugandan BaMasaaba ethnic group. Those who
left moved into what is now Bungoma County of Kenya. Occasionally intermarriages used to take place between the Bukusu and the neighbouring communities (Ayot, 1977). The Kalenjin neighbours gave their sons to the Bukusu to herd their cattle. During famine, the Kalenjins used to even sell their children to Bukusu. The Bukusu also used to send their own young boys to grow up with Kalenjin or Maasai families, in some cases for espionage purposes. This was a clear sign of good relationship between the Bukusu and their neighbours (Were, 1967).

To this end, the above demographic, geographic and background factors are important variables when exploring protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it, particularly those involving ethnic groups or clans. As discussed later in this chapter, in the historical evolution of the Mt Elgon area, the ethnic identity and stereotyping and natural resources; have been and remain influential forces in forging the conflicts in the area. For instance, the SLDF has ostensibly resisted government attempts to evict squatters in the Chebyuk settlement scheme. The eruption of violence led to the death of over 300 people, while over 60,000 people were displaced from their homes (Wakhungu et.al, 2008).

This scenario raises the following questions: What is the reasons for the widespread violence that engulfed the area after the controversial land allocation? What led communities that have been living together in relative harmony, intermarried,
shared common markets, infrastructure and schools to commit atrocities of such magnitude against each other? What is the explanation of the quick mobilisation of the youth militia groups and gangs that attacked looted, raped and killed neighbours and “foe”? How does one explain the partisan behaviour, of especially the police whose motto is “Utumishi Kwa Wote” (Swahili for Service to All) and their aloofness as they watched groups of people young and old commit atrocities against particular ethnic or sub-ethnic groups? What is the explanation of the impunity that accompanied politicians and leaders who incited violence and security government organs that shot and killed innocent civilians? How could, “unequal land allocation” lead to such atrocities? An exhaustive historical review of the patterns and diverse relationships within the wider socio-economic and political forces in the area from the colonial days to present day, to be analysed below may help shed light on some or all these sub questions.

2.3 A Synopsis of Protracted Conflicts in Mt Elgon

2.3.1 The Colonial Legacy

Akin to other African countries, Kenya was a colonial construct (Elkins, 2005). Briefly explained, the scramble and partition of colonies in Africa among European countries reached fever pitch in 1884, when the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) was convened to partition Africa amongst European powers including; Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, and Spain (Schraeder, 2005). The exercise of
partitioning Africa at the Berlin Conference was guided and conducted mainly from the prism of economic resources (Schoeman, 1999); where disparate traditional communities were forcibly cobbled together to form a single large territorial entity.

It was in this fashion that most colonial African states, including Kenya, were formed (Were, 1967a; 1967b; Aseka, 1989; TJRC, 2013). In this regard, a British trading company; Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), was set up and posted to administer Kenya under the name British East Africa Protectorate in 1895 and soon after, opened the highlands to white settlers, even before it was officially declared a British colony in 1920 (Singh, 1965).

The extent of colonialism’s role in laying the framework for protracted conflicts with ramifications in the post-independence era may best be illustrated by events stemming from three distinct but interrelated processes that shaped and consolidated their hold on the country (Sorrenson, 1967; 1968). As earlier highlighted, the first, from which others followed, was alienation and acquisition of land as a prelude to the establishment of a colonial state (Nwankwo 1998). The sequel to this was imposition of English property law and its acclamation of title and private property rights in the alienated areas that came to be known as the “White Highlands” (Kimenyi & Ndungu, 2005). Land tenure reform in the Native Reserves under the Swynnerton Plan completed the equation by both deepening and diversifying its structure. Each of these processes gave rise to unique but related
sets of problems regarding access and control of land thereby laying the basis for a rather complex land question whose solution continues to plague the Kenyan polity (Ghai et al., 1970; Kanyinga, 1998).

In the context of Mt Elgon conflict, colonialism had several consequences. First, an important landmark of colonialism happened in 1932 when the colonial state in its effort to create “White Highlands” for European settlers. This action evicted the traditional communities, causing mass displacement in alienated areas (Kanogo, 1993). This affected a number of communities among them the Sabaot, who by then occupied the extensive plains of what is now Trans-Nzoia county, and the Bukusu into the Kavirondo Native Reserve (Syagga, et al., 2011; TJRC, 2013) to give way to the colonial settlers in 1920s and 1930s without compensation. Though the colonial administration had proposed a compensation package of 2,000 sterling pounds for those affected in the eviction based on the recommendations of the 1931 Carter Commission on Land, this was never implemented (KLA, 2007).

In this respect, the loss of land not only alienated the Mt Elgon community from its means of livelihood, but the dispersal patterns of the displaced members also heralded a process of intra-community differentiation and rivalry that feeds the conflict (Simiyu, 2008). As earlier highlighted, the Mosop relocated to Chepkitale “trust land” on the upper slopes of Mount Elgon (at an altitude of 2700 to 3300
metres) above the dense forest in a marginal and inhabitable mountain moorland characterized by poor soils and vegetative resources. They occupied an area of about 35,000 hectares. Another section, the Soy settled on the lower slopes of the mountain (below an altitude of 1,800 metres), in a rich agricultural area now known as Chepyuk. The rest of the Mount Elgon populace such as the Bukusu, the other Sabaot sub-groups and the Tesowere scattered throughout the slopes and foothills of Mt Elgon (Medard, 2008; TJRC, 2013).

At this point, it has to be stressed that the systematic application of the colonial political and socio-economic systems had left indelible marks on the young state, by creating deep divisions which fractured a once unified community where the population’s composition and the pattern of settlement had defined geographical structures. For example, the creation of native reserves ensured that rural areas outside the European domain were demarcated and administered largely as tribal units. The colonial government restricted trade and contact between these administrative units. In addition, land had acquired a significant position in the life of the new nation. Over the years, a sense of feeling that “this is our area” or “this is our territory” or “this is our land” developed (Rutten & Owuor, 2009). These meant that one was there because of colonial convenience but over the years, a consciousness of ownership of land began to emerge. This in turn led to the convergence of territory and ethnic groups. This information could be deemed
relevant to the larger body of the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon, especially in explaining the nature and characteristic of the protracted conflict in the area. To reach an accurate understanding of its role; it is important to examine this claim in further detail, under the postcolonial period in the next section.

2.3.2 Post Colonial Period

Understanding the protracted nature of the Mt Elgon conflict cannot be divorced from the social, economic and political developments that followed Kenya’s independence after decades of oppression under the colonial rule. At the dawn of its independence in 1963, attempts were made by central governments to “mobilize its resources to attain a rapid rate of economic growth for the benefit of its people” through the Sessional Paper No. 10, of 1965 entitled *African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya* (GoK, 1965). On the contrary, around the same time, the situation for the majority of the rural poor did not change. Instead, the independence revolution worsened poverty and inequality as it concentrated wealth in the hands of the ruling elite (Odinga, 1974; Gutto, 1995).

Land redistribution was an essential expectation of decolonization since it had in the first place, been forcefully taken away by colonialists (Asingo, 2003). However, the post-independence government chose an approach that glossed over the land question. This is because it did not only fail to redress historical injustices and inequalities in land ownership and access, but also created injustices of its own and
perpetuated inequalities by generating “an internal logic of control, economic power and disempowerment from those unable to partake in the mechanisms established for land redistribution” (Kariuki, 2004). The approach involved the establishment of a total of 123 state-run Million Acres Settlement Schemes in former White Highland areas as well as a market-based redistribution mechanism based on the principle of a willing buyer and willing seller (Leys, 1976; Kakai 2000). The schemes generally ranged in size from five thousand to ten thousand acres (Anderson, 2005; Médard 2000).

In the context of Mt Elgon, the idea of resettling the Mosop and the Sabaot in the Diaspora who had been displaced in the 1920s and 1930s (Ngulutu, 2013) from the trust land high up the mountain, to a more hospitable environment with their Soy counterparts was mooted as far back as 1965 by the post-colonial government (Lynch, 2006, Simiyu, 2008). From the government standpoint, the initiative was guided by other equally compelling sound, legitimate and developmentally-oriented reasons, including: Protecting the Mosop against violent incursions from communities across the border in Uganda. The remoteness and inaccessibility of Chepkitale also made it difficult for the government to provide services to the Mosop. Communication between Chepkitale and the other inhabited parts of the region was poor. Transport was by foot and donkeys because only footpaths existed through the forest. There were no health facilities and the only school in the area,
Kashok Primary School, had no trained teachers. Above all, the entire Chepkitale region was a water catchment area that needed to be conserved, which the government proposed to do by establishing a game reserve that would also generate income from tourism (Lafargue, 2008; Medard, 2008; TJRC, 2013).

The creation of the game reserve in 1968 added some urgency to the resettlement plans. To begin with, the game reserve took up a substantial portion of the moorlands on which the Mosop grazed their animals and foraged. This provoked protests from the Mosop as well as precipitating environmental degradation due to overgrazing and overcrowding in the smaller remaining area. To cater for this, a settlement scheme was established down-slope in Chepyuk in 1971 on which the Mosop would be relocated from Chepkitale trust land. To create room for the settlement scheme, part of the forest reserve was earmarked for degazettement (Lynch, 2011). The Legal Notice No. 35 of 1968 under the Land Consolidation Act (Cap 283) saw the establishment of the Chepyuk Settlement Scheme which was divided into three portions, referred to locally as “phases” namely the Chepyuk Settlement Scheme phase I, phase II and phase III to settle the Mosop.

To this end, the study seeks to cautiously and systematically identify changes over time in relation to the factors (triggering and root causes), which contributed to the violent conflicts, the parties involved, and the frequency of the events. Another part
of the rationale behind this division is that these periods were characterised by different regimes and different policies/strategies for conflict resolution. In this regard, such classification might help draw attention to the effects of such policies on the intensification of the protracted violent conflicts and the change in the way of dealing with the conflicts or the lack thereof.

2.3.2.1 Phase 1 of Land Resettlement

This first resettlement took place from 1971 to 1974 and is commonly referred to as Chepyuk Phase I. It consisted of 1489 parcels of five acres of land was implemented in the present Emia and Chepyuk locations of Kopsiro division. This helped bring the Mosop once again nearer to the Soy (Ndungu, 2008; Lafargue, 2008). There is some historical evidence from documented history (UNDP/OCHA, 2009; PeaceNet, 2007) that suggest that Mosop leaders invited a section of their Soy counterparts to join them in a bid to effectively occupy the expansive Chepyuk territories as a way of keeping off any would-be “intruders” since the Mosop were small in number. In this way, the Mosop and Soy considered the Chepyuk area their rightful territory (KLA, 2007). In a way therefore, their action was a protest against the government’s decision to limit their land occupancy to only a small area. However, other sources claim that the inclusion of Soy families in the scheme was necessary in order to achieve a mandatory minimum of 600 families required to constitute a settlement scheme as provided for under the resettlement policy existing at the time. The Soy thus slowly settled in Chepyuk I. However, no formal
documents of land ownership were given to the Soy to prove their land claims (Simiyu, 2008; Medard, 2008).

According to Simiyu (2008), members of neighbouring communities especially the Bukusu and Teso also moved into the area. Some of them acquired land either by paying a purchase price in money or in exchange for providing labour to Mosop and Soy to clear the forest. Still no formalized land ownership documentation was completed. Thus, by the time degazettement took place in 1974 through Legal Notice No. 51 and official land allocation commenced, the forest had already been cleared; people had divided the land amongst themselves and settled there, while others had sold their plots. In addition, there were more families in the area than had been targeted for resettlement (Rawlence, 2008).

For instance, early in that year, the government evicted 80 families from Ramromwet forest area in Kapsokwony division and these families ended up in Chepyuk. This prompted the government to establish a committee to verify claims and identify the families to whom land was to be allocated, as a result some people missed out and others were evicted. In the end, some 650 Mosop and 300 Soy families received land, with Soy and Ndorobo elders agreeing that the Teremi River in lower Chebyuk would constitute the boundary between the communities. Moving forward and in order to understand the protracted nature of the conflict in
Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it, we must now turn to the phase II of the land allocation (Rawlence, 2008).

2.3.2.2 Phase II of Land Resettlement

The death of Jomo Kenyatta in 1978 opened the way for Daniel Arap Moi to take over as the President of Kenya. Exploiting his experience as a long-term serving Vice-President, Moi was elected unopposed as the President in the 1979 one-party elections (Korwa & Munyae, 2001). From then onwards, Moi became “all powerful” (Branch, 2011; Throup & Thornby, 1998) and took all possible measures to entrench his regime, in the process transforming Kenya into a fully authoritarian state (Cheeseman 2009; Mwakikagile, 2004). Worth stressing is that, both the Kenyatta and Moi regime perfected the art of patron-clientism by meeting delegates of ordinary Kenyans mainly in their rural homes, Gatundu in Central province and Kabarak in Rift Valley respectively (Branch, 2011; Throup & Hornsby, 1998; Munene, 1997). Terms such as going to Kenyatta to “lick sugar” (Mueller, 1984) or to drink “chai”, Swahili for, tea (Munene, 1997), or “buying land,” or going to Moi “to eat ugali” were used (Mueller, 2008). Moi saw the thawing of the land question (Kayinga, 1998; Mutua, 2008) and from the mid-1980s onward, the Moi regime became progressively more active in using land allocation and the land-restitution issue as tools to forge a cohesive ethno-political constituency out of the Kalenjin groups and the other ethno cultural groups claiming to be native or
indigenous to the Rift Valley-the Kalenjin groups, the Maasai, Turkana, and Samburu (Collectively known as KAMATUSA) (Lynch, 2008).

As such, those who felt unfairly shut out of the scheme/or were evicted petitioned the government to reconsider their plight. These groups included Soy who claimed that they had either been given or had bought land from the Mosop and had been wrongly overlooked and subsequently evicted by the committee that had decided on final allocations in Phase One of the resettlement. President Moi conceded in 1979, after which more land was set aside for resettlement at Cheptoror and Kaimugul which became Chepyuk II covering Cheptoror and Kaimugul (Simiyu, 2008; TJRC 2013).

The Mosop lifestyle that revolved around herding and foraging in the forest could not allow them till their land (KNCHR report, 2008), instead they preferred to either rent it to the Soy or sell it altogether, and that some of them preferred to go back to Chepkitale Land Unit which was now officially under Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) (Mwasserah, 2008). The money economy and new lifestyle that they were introduced to upon relocation from Chepkitale placed pressure on the Mosop to sell land in order to meet basic needs. Over time, the Soy and to some extend the Bukusu were able to acquire much of the land in Chepyuk I and ended up dominating the scheme that had ironically been created for the Mosop. The KWS evicted the
Mosop from the gazetted land precipitating an influx of squatters into Chepyuk settlement Scheme which they had already sold. The Mosop realized that they no longer owned their land and demanded it back. The Soy, on the other hand, demanded a refund of their money and threatened to oust the Mosop out of the scheme if they did not comply (Simiyu, 2008). The squatters later settled to the East and West of the legally excised and adjudicated area and began agitating for formalization of their settlement within the forest area (Ngulutu, 2013).

As Médard (2009) reports, the simmering dispute reached President Moi in 1988, through a delegation of Mosop elders, who presented a memorandum outlining their many concerns about the land situation in Mount Elgon. This situation prompted the President to order for a re-evaluation of the land allocation process. This led to the annulment of the allocations and the creation of a vetting committee to determine who was to get the land. The committee consisted of Mr. Lekolool (who was at the time Commissioner of Western Province), Mr. Changole (District Commissioner Bungoma) and a Mr. Muchumbet (a government surveyor). They began work in early 1989 (TJRC, 2013). Applications came in from not only the Soy and the Mosop, but from members of other communities, the Bukusu particularly, who hail in the area. Overwhelmed by the vast numbers, the committee was forced to introduce balloting which reduced the entire allocation process to a kind of raffle; those whose names and numbers came up counted themselves lucky.
The Committee also capped land parcel sizes at 2 hectares as way of admitting larger numbers into the scheme (TJRC, 2013; KNHCR, 2008).

In the end of the re-evaluation of the land allocation process, a group of Mosop were settled in the Cheptoror and Kaimugul areas, while applications from members of other communities, including the Soy who had already settled in the area-some by way of land purchases from Mosop but for which they lacked proof of ownership- were mostly disregarded. According to the TJRC (2013) report, unsuccessful applicants were evicted from their farmlands and drifted to urban centres such as Kapsakwony, Cheptais, Bungoma, Kitale and Webuye (TJRC, 2013). This action enraged the Soy in particular, especially in view of claims of nepotism, non-involvement of community leaders, corruption and the fact that some “foreigners” from outside had benefited from the land allocation process.

Subsequently, Soy leaders- among them local politician and the then Mount Elgon KANU chairman, Fred Chesebe Kapondi- petitioned the government for establishment of a third phase of the settlement exercise in Chepkurkur and Korng’otuny (UNDP/OCHA, 2010). This was meant to resettle the evictees and other Sabaot who remained landless. They met President Moi in 1989 and again in 1993 to present their case (KLA 2007; TJRC, 2013). Worth emphasizing is that, the Moi regime encouraged the airing of the land grievances of those who had lost
out or been dispossessed in the land-allocation politics of the 1960s and 1970s, calling into question the legitimacy of settlement schemes created under the patronage of Kenyatta. This underscored and heightened the political contingency of the prevailing distribution of land (Kayinga, 1998).

In the early 1990s, there was growing pressure from citizens and grass-roots movements within civil society so called “second liberalization”. This group was fed up with poverty, economic mismanagement and authoritarianism. As such, they initiated vocal demands for greater democracy and good governance (Nasong’o et al., 2007). An NCCK study explains that the 1990s’ advent of pluralist politics ruptured Mt. Elgon’s relative stability (it was then part of Bungoma District), as identity politics redefined inter-ethnic relations. The Bukusu (dominant in then Bungoma District), were mainly pro-opposition, while the Sabaot supported President Daniel arap Moi’s KANU. In this period, intra-Sabaot (Soy-Ndorobo) and Sabaot-Bukusu clashes broke out in Mt. Elgon causing massive displacements of the Bukusu to urban centres such as Kapsakwony, Cheptais, Bungoma, Kitale and Webuye as they were unlikely to vote for the ruling KANU party (NCCK, 2008; TJRC, 2013). To further reconstruct the protracted Mt Elgon conflicts, it is imperative to examine the phase 3 of land allocation in order to establish the nature and characteristics of the protracted conflict in the area.
2.3.2.3 Phase III of Land Resettlement

Documented history has it that in January 1993, two minibuses full of elders and local notables motored out of Mount Elgon. Their destination and mission were familiar ones: an appointment with President Moi to discuss the perennially thorny issue of Chebyuk settlement scheme (TJRC, 2013). Following the 1993 visit, President Moi issued a directive to resettle those affected, primarily members of the Soy clan. Consequently, additional land at Chepkurkur and Korng’otuny was set aside for what would become the third phase of resettlement, called Chepyuk III, that was intended for 1732 families with 2-hectare allocations. Again, as in the preceding phases the scheme was introduced into an area already characterized by different forms of land occupation. Moreover, as soon as Phase III was announced, it attracted a slew of newcomers’ intent upon formulating their own claims to the land. Typically, inertia, confusion and delays set in (Simiyu, 2008; TJRC, 2013).

It was not until the early 2000s, that the government machinery finally moved into action. The permanent secretary ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR) authorized an excision of a further area covering 3,568 hectares to accommodate these squatters. Later, another area covering 496 hectares was authorized for excision to accommodate people who had settled between river Malakisi and its tributary (Namwaya, 2007). For many of the same reasons already explained, surveying was a slow and difficult process that ran into a number of headwinds including the emergence of a campaign known as Nyumba kwa Nyumba.
(KNCHR, 2008; Simiyu, 2008). The campaign meant that, people would be allocated whatever land they were using and had claimed as their own despite the fact that some of these plots were larger than the two hectares that the government intended (TJRC, 2013).

In the wake of the 2002 general election and in order to dislodge Moi and the KANU party after they had been in power for four decades, a coalition of parties - the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) - was formed (Amutabi, 2009; Biegon, 2009; Branch 2011) which had Mwai Kibaki as the undisputed presidential candidate. It was at this stage that the Nyumba Kwa Nyumba campaign became a political maxima that characterised the political transition in 2002 as political aspirants promised Land restitution or resettlement to the hundreds of thousands of IDPs. The election saw John Serut defeat the incumbent Joseph Kimkung to become the area Member of Parliament (MP) (KNCHR, 2008).

In 2003, the new government of Mwai Kibaki moved a step further and surveyed land in phase I and II and gave title deeds to allottees without incident but Chepyuk Phase III remained unresolved (Ngulutu, 2013). At this point, it must be further stressed that Mount Elgon did not exist in a vacuum. It lay against the broader tableau of national politics, especially the 2005 referendum on the adoption of a new constitution, popularly known as the “Wako Draft” that pitted the Banana
versus Orange teams (Chege, 2008; TJRC 2013). The banana and orange fruits assumed unprecedented political significance in the badges of allegiance in a heated constitutional campaign. They were picked by election officials, to assist the process of voting, in the new constitution referendum. Banana mark meant in favour of the new draft constitution while the orange mark meant against. The then Area MP and Assistant Minister for Planning and National Development, John Serut, sided with the government forces in support of the 2005 draft constitution (UNDP/OCHA, 2009). It is to be noted, however, that the area voted overwhelmingly for Orange, meaning they were against the draft constitution.

Later it turned out that the Mount Elgon’s “No” vote had lasting consequences for the open running sore that was land resettlement in Chebyuk scheme (UNDP/OCHA, 2009). In this sense, the land allocations were revised to one hectare per family, when the resettlement programme in Phase III was revisited in 2006. The government tried to solve the crisis by revoking the previous allocations and reducing the size of plots allocated to the members of the Soy clan from 2 hectares to 1 hectare in order to include members of the Mosop clan who were initially not supposed to benefit from Phase III settlement plan. In other words, it meant that many families who had been living on the land since 1971 faced eviction in order to accommodate the incoming Mosop (Médard, 2008). The Soy who already had land in the scheme were unwilling to comply with this and protested.
the inclusion of Mosops particularly after seven thousand applications were received and 1 500 families missed out on land allocation and were evicted from their farms. The majority of those who faced eviction were members of the Soy clan (Simiyu, 2008; Ngulutu, 2013).

Tensions that had been brewing since the start of Chepyuk Settlement Scheme in 1971 had finally reached a crisis point. The Soy could no longer stand the Mosop taking ‘their’ land (Medard 2008). Simiyu (2008) reports that an estimated 1 500 families faced eviction, many of whom had lived on the scheme since 1971. Some of these either did not fulfill all the requirements for allocation or, if they were successful, occupied larger pieces of land in the scheme and rejected the directive to give up part of their land for subdivision and allocation to other families. Several dissatisfied parties began calling for a total overhaul of the process, legal action was sought where it is alleged that the group collected money for purposes of seeking legal redress. However, this action did not bear any fruits as the land in contention had not yet been degazetted and therefore the parties lacked locus standi.

It is further alleged that the parties realizing that there was no political will to resolve the issue; they sought to channel the money into financing firearms for purposes of opposing the process and bringing it to a halt hence the formation of the Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF) (KNCHR, 2008).
2.3.2.4 Formation of Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF)

The above grievances led to the formation of the SLDF in 2006; a rag tag militia that relied heavily on ethnicity as a dominant force for mobilization the young men to join. It comprised young men largely drawn from the Soy clan of the Sabaot community who armed themselves ostensibly to resist government attempts to evict squatters in the Chebyuk area. The group was led by Wycliffe Kirui Matakwei in late 2005 and Jason Kipsangeiywo (Laibon) (Rawlence, 2008; KNCHR, 2008). The group initially called themselves Janja weed but later changed to SLDF, in effort to give the appearance of legitimacy and cultural affiliation, as that name was more telling of the nature of their fight (TJRC, 2013). The militia’s activities were concentrated in Kopsiro division where Chepyuk settlement scheme is located and in Kaptama and Cheptais divisions where most SLDF commanders (including Matakwei) hailed from. The majority of land claimants in Chepyuk III originally came from Kaptama (Ngulutu, 2013).

Documented history shows that the militia had a clear organizational structure and chain of command. It consisted of three separate divisions, namely a military, spiritual and a political wing. Wycliffe Matakwei (SLDF deputy leader) led the militia wing and David Siche, a former police officer, was in charge of training the militiamen with the assistance of retired and serving army and police officers. The militia used hi-tech weapons in its operations, including machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, hand grenades, land mines and rocket launchers. The SLDF’s
weapons of choice were AK-47 and G3 rifles. By August 2008, the military had recovered a total of 95 guns and more than 700 rounds of ammunition from the SLDF. Other weapons, which the militia used to a significant extent, included traditional weapons such as *pangas* (machetes), knives, and bows and arrows (Rawlence, 2008; Simiyu, 2008).

The spiritual wing was central to the SLDF military strategy. Jason Psongoywo Manyiror, the spiritual leader/prophet also referred to as ‘laibon’, led this wing. He administered the oath to all combatants and gave them special charms, ostensibly to bind them to the SLDF cause and imbue them with supernatural powers that would protect them from authorities and make them invincible to enemy bullets during combat. The spiritual wing played a central role in SLDF operations, encouraging young men to enroll in the militia and assuring them that they would enjoy mystic protection and be invincible. The confidence and psychological boost they derived from the oath and charms to some extent explain why the SLDF often sent information to its would-be targets ahead of time, telling them when they would strike. It also had the duty of rallying the community and politicians to the SLDF cause (Simiyu, 2008).

The third wing of the SLDF is the political wing. Believed to be the driving force behind the insurgency, this wing was at the same time the most elusive as it kept
on changing, whether by default or design. Notable figures were John Kanai self-proclaimed spokesman; Benson Chesikaki who was elected to the County Council of Mt. Elgon in December 2007, representing Emia ward; Nathan Wasama who was elected unopposed as a councillor in Sasuri ward; Wilberforce Kisiero, the MP for the former ruling party KANU between 1982 and 1997; John Serut, the MP from 2002 to 2007 and Fred Kapondi, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) MP between 2007-2013, have all been accused by human rights organizations of working to recruit, train, and finance militia who intimidated opponents (Rawlence, 2008). Having initially worked together, by the time of election in 2007 Serut and Kapondi had fallen out. After that, the SLDF began to target supporters of Serut, including Serut himself, because Serut supported the Chepyuk III settlement scheme against the wishes of most within the SLDF (Rawlence, 2008).

From a small group of fewer than a hundred fighters at the beginning of the conflict, the SLDF grew to a formidable force. In March 2008, Wycliffe Matakwei claimed to be commanding a force of 35,000 men, a figure that was obviously overstated (Rawlence, 2008). Nevertheless, the Western Kenya Human Rights Watch (WKHRW) report (2008) estimated the militia to be 3000 men, by no means a small outfit (Rawlence, 2008). Initially, recruitment was voluntary, but later SLDF demanded that every Soy family make at least one son available for training and duty. The SLDF had at least 30 cells of about 100 people each. Most of the cells
were manned by retired security officers, foreign mercenaries and child soldiers (Rawlence, 2008). In 2006, the WKHRW (2008) estimated that 650 children of school going age (under 18) had been forcefully recruited by SLDF. It stated that parents either had to pay a fee of Ksh10 000 or give up a child to the cause.

The SLDF’s mode of operation made it difficult for the police to combat it. Most of its members mixed freely with civilians during the day or when not part of a combat squad. Only the militia’s commanders, trainers and elite fighters had specific hiding places in Mount Elgon forest, where they met to review the situation and re-strategize. This enabled the group to congregate quickly in the forest, identify targets and disperse into the civilian population. Furthermore, it made use of camouflaged “anti-personnel carriers” to move weapons, which it delivered to operation squads at designated points near its targets and who, after the operation again meet the carriers and return the weapons to designated points (Rawlence, 2008; Simiyu 2008; Medard, 2008).

Members of the SLDF also established kangaroo courts to handle disputes and impose fines on victims. They had self-appointed judges in cases ranging from petty theft and family conflicts to simple disputes. Perpetrators of domestic violence were punished by public flogging. Women were easy targets for this violence because of cultural traditions that place the responsibilities of childcare and care of elderly on
women, making it harder for women to flee violence. Interestingly, it is noted that; for their own security, government administrative officers also referred cases and disputes to the SLDF as well as collecting taxes for the militia as a sign of submission to militia’s authority. Those who did not comply were either killed or forced to flee the area (Rawlence, 2008; KNCHR, 2008; Alston, 2009 p.27).

In terms of funding, the methods used by the militia to sustain and finance its activities were akin to those used by the Mungiki – in fact it seemed to have borrowed most of its modus operandi from the Mungiki. The SLDF collected “taxes” from the populations (Kanyinga, 2009a, p. 339) and effectively run a parallel administration. These illegal taxes were imposed on the residents of the area, especially those with some source of income. Initially, the militia gang demanded 1000 Kenyan shillings from every household as a once-off payment, but later it demanded individual monthly payments levied according to an individual’s level of income. Teachers and civil servants were forced to part with a portion of their salaries (between 2 000 and 5000 Kenyan shillings) as a protection levy, while farmers were forced to remit part of the proceeds from sales of produce like livestock, milk and crops to the group. The militia also collected a certain amount of food produce for every unit area harvested; for example, each household was required to surrender a 90 kg bag of maize for every acre harvested (Simiyu, 2008).
The transport sector was not spared. Public service vehicles remitted part of their daily income to SLDF. Apart from taxes, SLDF was said to have been bankrolled by some politicians as well as some wealthy families in the region. The SLDF also punished civilians by cutting off their ears and sewing up their mouths if they defied it (Oloo, 2010). The military established that SLDF was financially stable and had enough food supplies to last it for months. This emergent “insurgency economy” became a critical factor in extending the conflict by sustaining the militia fighters and by making the SLDF attractive to unemployed lower-class youths. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG) report (2008), support of powerful individuals for the SLDF, however, may have had moral and political rather than financial dimension.

The SLDF sought to evict “non-indigenous people” because it considered the region to belong to Sabaots and the Kamatusa group—a coalition of largely pastoralist tribes from the Rift Valley that share a common linguistic and cultural heritage. Its violent campaign sought to cause mass displacement of non-Sabaots and non-Kalenjins in the hope that a friendly central government will eventually legitimise facts on the ground (ICG, 2008). The SLDF employed a number of strategies to achieve its ends, including killings, kidnappings and torture. The SLDF attacks culminated in the most appalling humanitarian disaster in the history of the area; in the sense that SLDF not only killed persons who they perceived opposed
to it and its objectives but also tortured and maimed inhabitants who went against its code. It also attacked individuals who had land disputes with other landowners sympathetic to the SLDF or who hire the SLDF to intimidate. By the close of April 2008, SLDF activities had resulted in 615 deaths and about 66,000 internally displaced persons (Rawlence, 2008).

Contrary to the widely held belief that SLDF rebels lived in the forest, the military assault revealed that not only do they actually live among the local population, but most of them operate from their homes. They assembled only whenever “there was a job to be done”—such as attacking a specific target at a specific time—after which they merged with the civilian population again. This made the security personnel’s hunt for them in the forest futile. When the SLDF attacked, it organized itself in small groups of 10 to 12 people that made its movements difficult to detect. It was only a small group—mainly the commanders and strategists—that had specific bases and hiding places (such as caves in the forested mountain slopes) (KNHR, 2008).

In terms of politics, the militia’s activities had expanded and became more violent and more overtly political. In the run-up to and following the 2007 general elections, the SLDF supported certain political candidates and targeted political opponents and their supporters. The conflict in Mount Elgon escalated and took on overt political and ethno-nationalist dimensions. The SLDF allied itself with the
opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), and was fiercely intolerant of leaders and supporters of other parties, especially those from the ruling coalition that later became known as the Party of National Unity (PNU). The SLDF went so far as to intimidate and even execute PNU supporters. As a result, two ODM civic aspirants, Moses Makoit of Cheptais ward and Nathan Warsama of Sasur ward, were elected unopposed.

At parliamentary level, the SLDF targeted the sitting KANU MP, John Serut, who, although a Soy, was seen as acting against Soy interests. It targeted him and his family because it was claimed that he had used his position to secure the inclusion of the members of the Mosop clan in the third phase of the resettlement programme. Members of the Bukusu community were also targeted, as they were seen as likely to vote for the PNU coalition in the general elections. The SLDF also targeted supporters of Serut. Serut survived an assassination attempt when SLDF gunmen opened fire at him as he gave a speech outside the district commissioner’s office in Kapsokwony in May 2007. He did, however, lose two brothers and a niece later on (Rawlence, 2008). The SLDF promoted its favored candidates in the 2007 elections in a vicious campaign that, according to local residents, amounted to a campaign of terror. The candidates favored by the SLDF were all contesting on an ODM ticket. A chief from the area told a member of Human Rights Watch that the incumbent councilor for Emia ward, Nickson Manyuwas warned at gunpoint not to contest
against the ODM candidate. He also reported widespread intimidation and electoral violence (Rawlence, 2008).

2.3.2.5 Other Militias in Mt Elgon
In the absence of a concerted response by the government to the SLDF, and in the context of competitive displacement in the run-up to the elections, groups sought to displace supporters of their opponents, so they could not vote, other militia groups emerged in Mt. Elgon and in neighboring Trans-Nzoia district in the latter half of 2007 and early 2008 allied to different politicians and different ethnic groups. The two main groups were the Political Revenge Movement (PRF) and Mooreland Defense Forces (MDF).

The PRF was associated with former Kitale MP Davis Nakitare, who was arrested along with 205 youths undergoing military training on his farm in the Rift Valley on February 25, 2008 but were later on released. The Mooreland Forces were associated with families that originally came from Chepkitale who were at odds with the SLDF over their fair share of the land at Chepyuk settlement scheme. The Mooreland Forces defended residents against SLDF atrocities. In the worst bout of fighting, Mooreland and SLDF clashed in January 2008; four days of fighting reportedly left 32 dead (Simiyu, 2008; Rawlence, 2008).
The government was initially reluctant to tackle the SLDF menace as it considered the group as simply a rag-tag unit that would cease to exist with time. It was in 2007, when the group acquired more power, that the government took a more serious stance and deployed the police, the General Service Unit and the Anti Stock-Theft Unit against the SLDF. However, these operations were sporadic and not sustained, hence they failed to eliminate the group. The initial security response failed to contain the rapidly evolving armed group as it wreaked havoc in Mount Elgon and parts of Trans-Nzoia district (Mwasserah, 2008).

In addition, attempts by the provincial administration to hold meetings with the leaders from the two clans yielded no fruit thus contributed to the continued conflict in the region due to the revered position accorded to them in the Sabaot culture. In a disarmament effort, a meeting was held with all chiefs, District Officers (DOs), District Security Intelligence Committee (DSIC) and the Provincial Security Intelligence Committee (PSIC) where an amnesty for surrender of arms was declared. The surrender points were identified as Kipsigon, Masaek and Cheptais. In addition, a cash reward of $120 was promised for any weapon and ammunition that was surrendered to the police. However, by the expiry of the deadline, not a single weapon or ammunition had been handed in. This posed a threat to lasting peace in the region as many guns were still in the hands of the residents (Mwasserah, 2007; Simiyu, 2008).
2.3.2.6 Government Response - *Operation Okoa Maisha*

After the failure of repeated attempts to contain the group, the government acknowledged that the militia was bigger and better organized. In order to contain their expansion and the havoc they were causing; the government deployed the Kenya army in a joint operation with the police. This operation was referred to as *Operation Okoa Maisha* (Operation Save Lives) and was launched in March 2008, after the December 2007 election, in a bid to regain state control of the Mount Elgon district (Oloo 2010; TJRC 2013). The military set up a military camp at Kapkota in Sasur Location, Cheptais Division which became the base of their operations. The choice of location for the military base was based on the fact that many SLDF leaders and commanders hailed from the area. The military used both ground operations and aerial bombardments by means of helicopter gunships that targeted suspected SLDF sites in forests and caves. They cordoned off the area, restricting access by the media and on occasion, humanitarian agencies (Simiyu, 2008).

It must be stressed at this point that *Operation Okoa Maisha* had mixed results. For a start, although the deployment of the military was initially welcomed by local residents who had suffered at the hands of SLDF and other militiamen (KNCHR 2008), the systematic terror visited upon them by the military (which was supposed to protect them) exacerbated the misery and hopelessness of the local residents. This irony is worth exploring, in the sense that in a bid to apprehend the SLDF fighters, Human Rights organizations reported that the army applied brutal force to
extract information from the local residents. This involved rounding up all the males in the district for interrogation, which the human rights organisations claim involved heinous acts, including torture, mass detentions, forced confessions and extrajudicial killings (Rawlence, 2008).

The reports further allege that the army, in similar manner as the SLDF, raided homes at dawn and abducted men. Some of the suspected SLDF adherents were tortured and killed and their bodies either dumped in the forest or taken to the mortuary in Webuye or Bungoma, without recourse to judicial processes (Rawlence, 2008). Other accusations included maiming and torture, raping of women and young girls, indiscriminate burning of houses and food stores (KNHCR, 2008). It also led to a further displacement of an estimated 5000 people in the first month of its operation alone and about 600 reportedly fled to Uganda to seek refugee according to newspaper reports (Daily Monitor, 17 March 2008). This increased threat to regional security, as some militiamen also fled the area to Uganda, West Pokot and Eldoret in, North Rift area (Daily Nation, 8 April 2008).

Beyond the heartbreaking suffering, the event that was celebrated as the biggest victory by the military and seen by the government as the beginning of the end of the conflict was the killing of SLDF leader, Wycliffe Matakwei, in May 2008, and the imprisonment of other high ranking SLDF commanders. Some of the SLDF
militiamen surrendered and were disarmed, while others were captured or killed. The Moorland Forces surrendered their weapons to the Kenya Army, too (Simiyu, 2008). Human rights groups such as the KNCHR and Human Rights Watch put the number of people killed during the operation at about 2000. By June 2008, some 758 SLDF suspects had been arraigned in court on charges of promoting warlike activities (Rawlence, 2008; KNHCR, 2008).

The military defeat of SLDF in late spring 2008, forced the military to remain in the region operating from Kapkoto military camp from where, together with the knowledge and business communities, nongovernmental organizations, and peace related sectors have been running several reconstruction projects in an attempt to achieve sustainable peace. Signs of the new reality have slowly begun to emerge, manifested by farmers rehabilitating and replenishing their lands; children returning to schools; and businesses back in operation (Ngulutu, 2013).

2.3.2.7 Mt Elgon Today
The continuance of a lasting peace is largely contingent on the sustainability and support of the numerous peace efforts, but one should not lose sight of the challenges in such a process and the uniqueness of the complexities of the situation in Mt Elgon. Even if there is not a full-scale resumption of violence in recent days; insecurity, and instability pervade many parts of the area. It is also worth noting that tensions will still remain high if the land allocation process, coupled with high
rate of unemployment, poverty, a slowdown in economic growth, and detrimental impact of climate change is not addressed. There are as yet no political efforts to address these complex, linked risks in a joined-up way. It is alleged that a key reason for the lack of violence around the 2013 general election was widespread “conflict fatigue” following the 2006-2008 conflicts (International Alert 2015).

There have been reports (Wanyonyi, 2008) that ousted members of the gang were returning, as the re-emergence of violent incidences attest. Just as its counterpart, the Mungiki, the group seems to have learned how to survive government crackdowns (Oloo, 2010). Towards the end of 2008, the group had once again started charging illegal taxes and attacking and maiming those who refused to comply. Nevertheless, the killing of core members of the SLDF resulted in the group becoming a much less potent force and unable to inflict the kind of terror and hold, it had over the residents of the area.

2.4 Summary and Conclusion

The reconstruction of the protracted Mt Elgon conflict, from the pre-colonial to colonial period all through to the post-colonial period, portrays Mt Elgon as a region of paradoxes and extremes. By highlighting Mt Elgon, the context in which the protracted conflict violence is situated, this chapter has demonstrated the dynamic nature and evolution of the protracted conflicts in Mt Elgon. Certain factors associated with the nature of conflict in Mt Elgon can be identified. These
include overlapping factors such as the ethnic stereotyping; struggle for natural resources, particularly land and structural factors. To discuss the Mt Elgon conflict without addressing what these factors mean to the Mt Elgon conflict is to leave much of the story untold. This calls for a deeper understanding of how these factors contributed to the start and continuation of the conflict in Mt Elgon, which in turn is critical in understanding the nature and characteristics of the protracted conflict and the motivations driving it.
CHAPTER THREE: PROTRACTED CONFLICT IN MT. ELGON:
TOWARDS A MULTI-CAUSAL ANALYSIS

3.0 Introduction

From the previous chapter, the protracted conflicts in Mt Elgon is by its very nature very complex since it involves a multiplicity of actors under a wide range of conditions and circumstances with harrowing and devastating consequences. Interestingly, the past scholarship and analyses do not agree on a single theoretical and factual account of the causes of the conflict. The best approach in uncovering the causes and reasons for the longevity of the conflict is to look into the interaction of key variables such as ethnic polarization and stereotyping; natural resources, especially land; Structural factors and how these factors are manipulated in a manner that they reinforce or neutralize each other to produce and sustain the protracted conflict in the area. These key variables are central for understanding the empirical details of the conflict and the empirical details in turn, contributes to understanding the nature and characteristic of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it.

3.2 Ethnicity and Ethnic Stereotyping

As shown in the above introduction, ethnic polarization and ethnic stereotyping has proven to be one of the potent forces in understanding the causes of the protracted Mt Elgon conflict. This major and long-lived historical issue must be qualified. In
this respect, study interviews consistently revolved around the levels of violence directed at the community and the manner to which this appeared affective to ethnic polarization and stereotyping. In this section, the study sought to examine the extent to which ethnic identity and stereotyping has contributed to the protracted Mt Elgon Conflict.

For a start, majority of the respondents including those who were deemed fairly educated or self-employed, identified themselves in ethnic terms: “I am a Sabaot,” “I am a Teso,” “I am a Bukusu;” among others, when responding to one of the open-ended questions about how they identify themselves. One of the respondents indicated that ethnicity and stereotyping play an important role in justifying the choices made by individuals and by groups (KI2- August-2016, Kamachai). On the same note, study expert pointed out that the complex and ever-changing hierarchies of identity through membership of tribe, sub-tribe, or clan ranks first among other identity categories that can explicitly define humanity, across the African communities could be the reason for such formations (Expert Interview13-March-2015, Addis Ababa). The study expert went ahead to assert that ethnicity and ethnic stereotyping is a salient reason for the protracted conflicts in areas such as Mt Elgon. According to him, ethnic conflicts are still rife in most of the African communities. The tendency to engage in protracted violent conflicts along ethnic
lines or as a way of expressing group grievances is quite boundless in the region (Expert Interview 13-March-2015, Addis Ababa).

When asked about the 2006-2008 violent conflicts, ethnicity and ethnic stereotyping was mentioned by some of the key informants as a significant factor that largely explains the protracted conflict among the various groups in Mt Elgon. In one of the key informant interviews, the local administrator said that: although it is not easy at present to completely quantify, the damage done to the societal fabric and communal relations as a result of ethnic-driven targeted killings, ethnicity was significantly high (KI 10- August-2016, Soet).

Objectively, one learns that one of the unpleasant realities of this conflict situation is that it has divided the local communities along ethnic lines. For instance, narratives presented in one thought provoking FGDs, reported that the different ethnic groups had been on a conflicting path for so many decades that respondents were unable to recall a year when they went without conflict. One participant pointed out that “it’s almost terrifying and it dates back to millennia. At any given moment, there are reasons for antagonism and distrust. In fact he was worried that when they meet in heaven they will still fight (FGD 1-August-2016, Kapsakwany).
This is quite telling, as it demonstrates the ingrained nature of ethnicity and ethnic stereotyping in the protracted conflict. Such narratives then clearly undermine the common and unified good of community belonging (Expert Interview 3 – July -2014, Kigali). In most of the FGD, most responses were marked by sheer consistency in bald violence-based statements and strong feelings of animosity of each other. Most FGD participants accused and counter accused each other using phrases such as “they are the problem” or “it is from those “others”. This was supported by one of the key informant’s assertion that the militias and criminal gangs associated with different ethnic groups patrolled “their” areas, carrying out evictions and attacking the homes and retail premises of members of the other ethnic groups (FGD 1 – August -2016, Kapsakwany). This finding resonates with one of the key informant, a social worker in the area; who pointed out that insecurity pervaded many parts of Mt Elgon as the different ethnic groups lie in wait for one another, nourishing age-old hatreds (KI 8 – September-2016, Chepkurukur).

Additional insights from other key informants show that people inhabiting the area were deeply tribal and attributed the persisted insecurity to the preponderance of group conflicts, which had led to the burning of villages, the destruction of property, and the killing of people. A shopkeeper in the area observed that striking characteristic of the conflict was its sheer persistence and often expressed with
frightening intensity that arises from the deep-seated issues of ethnic identity, which was a major threat to stability and peace (*KI*<sub>18</sub>- Aug-2016, *Cheptoror*).

Moreover, in most cases, I observed people whose lips or hands had been mutilated as a result of the militia atrocities. With this move, some of the information derived from expert interviews pointed to the fact that the loss of life, untold suffering and destruction of property aggravated the pain, which quickly turned into bitterness inflaming a strong desire for revenge. As the respondents narrated their experience of the attacks, it was evident that most of them were still traumatized and angry. This is captured in the following response from one of the participants:

> They abducted my two Sons and killed my husband as I watched. I survived by the mercy of God. I live with this memory every day and I am sure many others whose children were abducted, or family members and friends were killed are going through the same. (*KI*<sub>27</sub>- Nov-2016, *Kaptaboi*)

These findings are further corroborated by responses from one of the social workers in the area, which aptly remarked that ethnicity and ethnic stereotyping remains one of the biggest problems that are still felt in the minds of many victims, and one that is perhaps likely to take a longer time to overcome, if at all (*KI*<sub>4</sub>- April-2014, *Chewangoi*). In this case, the protracted conflict is borne out by the fact that issues of long standing revulsion or resentments towards ethnic groups different from one’s own or fear of domination, prompts protagonists to resort to violence. This is
because most people view each other as evil, and as natural subjects for violence (*Expert Interview*3-July -2014, Kigali).

Such pointers clearly make peace exceptionally hard to attain and equally difficult to sustain. As further explained; the “asymmetrical retaliation”, subsequently provides a legitimate grievance for the bewildered and enraged victims, to launch another retaliatory attack and the cycle of violence begins a fresh (*Expert Interview*3-July -2014, Kigali). The above view is shared by one of the civil society key informants who indicated that militia groups mobilized and fought using clan power (*KIj5*- Aug-2016, Makutano). In addition, it is germane to point out that SLDF militias were mainly members of the Soy clan while other groups such as the MDF were also formed along clan lines.

In this way, it can be said that the protracted Mt Elgon conflict is premised against a longstanding enmity between the Soy and Mosop. Similarly, and partly because of this observation, leading newspapers over-emphasized ethnicity with headlines such as “The genesis of ethnic clashes in Mt Elgon,” and went ahead to describe the conflict as “rival communities” embroiled in ethnic tension and fighting (Ng’etich, & Walia, 2007). Another cardinal observation was that a variety of scholars, human rights experts, and essayists involved in the area -had long framed the protracted conflict as an ethnic “bi-polarity” of Soy and Mosop (Rawlence, 2008 & KNCHR, 2008 reports). From this, we can infer that the inaccurate local media reporting may be pushing an unhelpful narrative about the conflict, thus
distracting people from the underlying causes and also exacerbate existing ethnic prejudices.

Sustaining the ethnic identity and stereotyping narrative as a factor behind the protracted Mt Elgon conflict; study experts have it that the protracted conflicts was manifested by a massive scale of the forced movement of people back to their supposedly ancestral homelands (Expert Interview- March-2015, Nairobi). From this, interviews with conflict victims who were violently evicted from their homes in Mt Elgon and migrated to neighbouring Chwele, Kimilili and parts of Kitale towns, one gets the impression that most displaced people were hesitant to return to their homes due to lack of credible guarantees for safety and security coupled with uncertainty of durable peace. This was captured well by sentiments from one of the study respondents, who was displaced by the conflict from his land in Mt Elgon and relocated to Chwele town that:

It is very hard to think of returning to that area. Those people just want to see you dead so that they can take your property. So, it is very hard to think of going back to live amongst them. I cannot accept to do that. My life is more important than anything else: you can lose your property and that is terrible but once you have lost your life that is the end. Had we been killed, we would not be here speaking with you now. I cannot say I want to go back there (KI16-Sept-2016, Chwele).

An old widow who relocated to Kimilili town holds the same view:
The fear of another conflict and being rendered homeless or even losing my family and property is very devastating. I used to have a well-stocked kiosk, which was burnt down during the violence” (KI32- Sept-2016, Kimilili).

To take another example:

Around that time, we never slept in our houses, we would stay in the bush for fear of being attacked at night until we found our way to this place. It was the forest that rescued us; otherwise they would have killed us all (KI29- Dec-2014, Kitale).

Notwithstanding the above findings, twisted perception also emerged regarding the role of ethnicity and stereotyping in the protracted conflict. One of the key informants- a senior leader of a local Pentecostal church expressed the community despair, that they did know have answers as to why the attacks occurred and that” they still wonder why and who (was responsible). Up to date, we are yet to get the answers to these questions (KI14- Aug-2016, Makutano).

In this cycle of violence; experts familiar with such ethnic stereotypes in protracted conflicts reaffirm the situation by noting that what might appear to be at times intractable ethnic clashes are in fact fights that are only remotely related to expressions of ethnic identity and stereotypes (Expert Interview5-July -2014, Kigali). It was noted that not all respondents were under the illusion that the situation was clear and straight forward as they linked the conflict to some historical
antecedents. This argument was supported by the fact that some of the respondents especially during the FGD emphasized that ethnicity and ethnic stereotyping not only has a history, but also political elites deliberately fomented and organized the violence. For instance, it was reported that politicians supported local militias for their own selfish political interest made the local gangs more powerful (*FGD₁*-August -2016, Kapsakwany).

The above assertion echoes the respondent’s accounts of the conflict, who noted that the memories of “historical injustices” and poorly handled settlement schemes committed by “others” were revived by predatory political elite to evoke emotions of fear, resentment, rage, and hate against other ethnic groups to marshal political support among their ethnic kinsmen. One of the FGD participants said that:

> I can assure you there were no other compelling reasons for the violence apart from politics. They have done it in the past and I know they are still capable of doing it (*FGD₃*-August -2016, Soet).

To further buttress the above assertion; some key informants stated that multi-party politics have exacerbated, even exploited their age-old rivalries. In this sense, it was noted that although people from various ethnic or clans lived side by side; the fear or feeling of antagonism towards “each other” only escalated during times of election campaigns that were highly tuned on ethnic lines.

> It was not the first time that ethnic violence erupted here; it usually
coincides with electioneering period. Infact, this was the third time I was being affected and I had no choice but to leave (KI24- Oct-2016, Chwele).

Closely related:

During the first clashes in 1992, we assembled in a school, we were assisted by the police until the situation calmed down and then we returned to our homes and resumed normal life. But the clashes of 2006-2008 were of higher intensity: they burned our property and told us that this was not our home. When we tried to assemble at the police station the clashes intensified, and we had to leave our land completely behind (KI22- Oct-2016, Kitale).

According to the study experts, this is particularly pertinent given the fact that the latest 2006-2008 conflict occurred just after the hotly contested 2005 constitutional referendum and the country’s general elections that were to be conducted towards the end of 2007; which poisoned the political atmosphere and laid the groundwork for the 2006-2008 chaos (Expert Interviews-March-2015, Nairobi). Other study experts who were consulted, have it that instead of evolving, most of the African democracies have regressed to produce ethnic leaders more intent on leading their people in conflict with their rival communities. As such,

How else could one explain that people who have lived together in harmony as friends and good neighbours despite their ethnic differences suddenly turn enemies of one another, if they are not incited by frivolous “political
entrepreneurs” who, because of corruption, mismanagement, and greed for power, manipulate ethnic identity and use it to achieve their personal political agenda (*Expert Interview* March-2013, Istanbul).

A further subtle example, which highlights the idea of the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic stereotyping, is presented in an interview with a quite open and well-educated displaced family man in Kitale, who stated that the violence was premeditated. He explained his eviction from Mt Elgon, with a sense of sorrow and talks about the loss of “good times”. He is particularly thoughtful of the “betrayal” by his neighbors, his childhood schoolmates and friends:

> It is interesting that the very people that we had lived with in peace evicted us. I do not know any other place to call home apart from Mt Elgon, where I was born and brought up. I was shocked to see that those we stayed with for many years, those I went to school with and those who our children played with turned against us and became enemies (*KI* Dec-2014, Kitale).

He goes on to assert:

> They not only burned and destroyed our property but also evicted me and left me with nothing. I later learnt that these people were politically incited. Politicians had convened meetings and youth were encouraged to evict us (*KI* Dec-2014, Kitale).
The above revelations are also in line with some of the opinion leaders who cited that although such incidents of forced displacement were known to the authorities, they were rarely condemned, and little was done by way of practical measures to stop them such as punishing perpetrators (\textit{KI}_{13}- June-2014, Masahek; \textit{KI}_{14}- Aug-2014, Makutano).

Essentially, this account illuminates that ethnicity has gained momentum largely due to its manipulation and politicization by leaders in the struggle to attain and maintain power and resources. Interestingly, for some locals that the researcher interacted with, it is the tribe/clan that is perceived to gain from these resources when a leader from their ranks ascends to power. This makes some communities to resort to violence to support “one of their own” (\textit{KI}_{12}- June-2014, Masahek; \textit{KI}_{2}-April-2014, Kamachai). Similarly, Kaufman rightly noted that “belligerent leaders stoke mass hostility; hostile masses support belligerent leaders, and both together threaten other groups, creating a security dilemma, which in turn encourages even more mass hostility and leadership belligerence,” (Kaufman, 1996).

To this end and on the basis of the observations made from the above findings, the appropriate, and most significant, question to confront at this point is: Is ethnic identity and stereotyping narrative the answer to the causes of the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon? Taken together, each of the above narratives claim, at the very least, to justify a strong presumption for the ethnic identity and stereotyping
as a factor contributing to the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon. However, there is a certain lack of clarity with regard to the information on the role of ethnic polarization and stereotyping in the protracted Mt Elgon conflict. Hints are dispersed along the way, but the bottom line consensus is that no precise answer has been given. The questions of “who the protagonists are?” is subjective, and differences of opinion are indicative of the complex, ambiguous, and contested environment in which ethnicity and Ethnic stereotyping has played out. From passive observation, the general impression obtained is that the causes of protracted conflict in Mt Elgon are more varied and complex than the above accounts would appear to suggest and attempts to assign the events of 2006-2008 to single determinants such as ‘ethnicity’ or ‘ethnic stereotyping’ are misleading. In line with this, the next section will therefore highlight the contributory role of Natural resources, especially land in the protracted conflict of Mt Elgon.

3.3 Natural Resources and Protracted Conflicts

From a general perspective, the relevance of natural resource in the Mt Elgon protracted conflict is quite apparent. The theme of natural resources, especially land recurs in the study findings as one of the glaring elements that have brought out some of the extremes in Mt Elgon’s history and current security complexities. In common to other community conflicts’, dealing with land questions in Mt Elgon is central to understanding the nature of the Protracted Conflicts and the motivations driving; as noted elsewhere, land conflict is a phenomenon that is substantively
important in itself. Several recent studies by political scientists and conflict scholars have shown that land conflict is almost always a prominent component of civil and communal conflict in Africa (Nina von Uexkull & Thérese Pettersson). Even electoral conflict is associated with land conflict in one way or another, as Scott Straus argued in a 2012 piece in African Affairs. In this section, the study sought to investigate this puzzle, with both direct and indirect questions tapping on broad orientations about how and why land was a bone of contention.

For instance, while giving the broader perspective of the protracted conflicts among the different ethnic groups, some of the expert interviews showed that the endemic land insecurity was heavily linked to the protracted conflict:

It is clear that natural resources, specifically land resources play a very important role in conflicts around the world – whether as root cause, driver, or exacerbating factor (Expert Interview 10-March-2015, Nairobi).

Correspondingly, throughout the process of collecting the field data, one comes across widespread use and acceptance of land scarcity as an auto-explanation for the conflicts in the area among the study respondents. Several respondents indicated a myriad of cross-cutting factors pertaining to the different ways in which land was linked to the protracted conflict. The factors ranged from overall land availability, the “physical distribution” of land, to population growth, its ownership and its transfer among others. However, to start with and for the purpose of further
contextualizing the issue of land, a close interaction with study respondents show that land is undoubtedly the most important natural resource in the area. According to local respondents:

You are always insecure unless you own some land, most people here rely on land for food and income (KI12- June-2014, Masahek).

According to study experts, this perception is fostered by the local cultural attitude about the importance of owning land:

Land is the most important asset for most people and will remain important for many years to come. Looking at both past and present community conflicts, the most determinant and persistent factor that has ignited community violence has been competition for land resources (KI19- Aug-2014, Cheptoror).

In close connection, one aspect of the field process that deserves mention was having an impressive and incisive focus group discussion in Kopsiro that captured the emotions and conveyed the salient issues of land that are at the heart of the interests of the local residents in Mt Elgon. In this case, participants spoke in near unison that, they look at land as their only source of survival, to quote one of old man, an FGD participant:

Land means everything to us. All our life revolves round it. We cannot fold our arms while other people take our land (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).
He goes on:

To keep quiet while others are encroaching on our land is like mortgaging the future of our children. Even the ancestors would turn angrily in their graves and rebuke us in no small measures,” (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).

In the same breath, it is informative to note that answers to the land question underscore the multiple dimensions and value of land. For most people as noted during the FGD, land is a cultural and spiritual asset, owned by families, kinship groups, clans and villages. It is their place of birth; the place where the ancestors are laid to rest; the place, which the creator has designated to be passed down to successive generations; and the final resting place for every child born on its surface. (FGD1-August -2014, Kapsakwany). This is further articulated in another FGD where respondents noted that the issue of land becomes even more crucial when one dies. One has to be buried on his land. (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).

Still on the issue of land, one of the study experts stated, “land has social psychological significance because of its attachment to the history, social existence and ethno-geographical identity of each community which further makes land issues emotionally charged” (Expert Interview12-Oct-2014, Addis Ababa).
He further asserted that given the strong attachment to land, most communities feel that it is an abomination to give away land (*Expert Interview* 12-Oct-2014, Addis Ababa). This was corroborated by an elderly woman who stated that:

My late father-in-law once told me that before we were born (referring to her generation) nobody ever sold land in our community. This idea of selling and buying land started when the white man came. They taught our people the habit of selling land. If our people had not started to sale land, we would not be killing each other today because these conflicts started when our people began to struggle for wealth through land sales (*KI* 4-April-2014, Chewangoi).

In addition, there seemed to be a strong argument that land ownership was a source of great pride to different communities in the area. To demonstrate the significance of land ownership, most of the local communities have demanded that all local markets and towns are named after them (*FGD* 3-August-2014, Suet). As summed up by one of the study experts, this underscores the place of land in African societies as a whole. Land ownership instills a sense of belonging to a community and creates the need to protect it against the enemies. It may explain why communities, who have a strong sense of belonging to common resources strongly, oppose individual land titling programmes (*Expert Interview* 14-March-2015, Istanbul).
In a related development, respondents also made references to acquisition of land. Out of the study interviews, most people stated that land was passed down patrilineally through families and clans via male heirs; women have access to land only through their husbands and male heirs. Non-clan members could use cultural land but cannot claim ownership (KI28- Dec-2014, Kaptaboi; KI13- June-2014, Masahek; KI11- June-2014, Soet).

From the above views, it is evident that the importance of land transcends economics into a breadth of social, spiritual, and political significance. This has resulted to strong attachments to land that any threat to the close links between the land and its owner generates conflict (Expert Interview14-March-2015, Istanbul). These findings resonate with Towett (2002) who writes in the oasis magazine that “for indigenous minority communities such as the Ogiek the relationship with land is not merely a question of possession and production but a material and spiritual element. As such, it should be preserved as a cultural heritage and pass it on to the future generations.”

However, it is important to note that the general impression obtained across the FGD participants, by the mention of “land,” especially agricultural land, evokes two types of feelings: Excitement and fear, this then leads to a discourse of turning a “resource blessing” into a “resource curse.” This is because most of the FGD respondents argued that the root cause of the protracted conflict in the area is motivated by access to land resources (FGD1-August-2014, Kapsakwany; FGD2-
The participants cited that the protracted conflict result from land scarcity. This is closely related to (Baechler, 1998; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Kahl, 2006) assertion that land pressure resulting from the population density poses the conflict problem.

Although this may be an overstatement, the growing population meant increasing land hunger and discontent. Majority of the respondents observed that the population has been increasing rapidly and the area is overcrowded, a situation that has led to an imbalance between the local population and the shrinking farm sizes. This in turn has led to the need for agricultural intensification to support farm-based economy. On the sensitivity of land issue in the society and with a reference to Rwanda genocide, Pottier (2006) argues that “ordinary people kill for economic gain, often for access to a victim’s land.” This problem is exacerbated where, as described in the preceding chapter, the Mt Elgon communities are economically dependent on subsistence production through agriculture activities and pastoralism. From the FGDs, subsistence production was rarely adequate to sustain livelihoods in the best of times and is highly at risk to ecological change (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur; FGD3-August -2014, Soet).

The basis for this argument is further explained by study experts who noted that pastoralism thrives well in an environment where mobility is encouraged.
Interestingly, pastoralists’ mobility is increasingly becoming limited as their land is progressively expropriated. As pastoralists become “boxed” within environments that cannot sustain their way of life, conflicts emerge (Expert Interview Oct-2014, Addis Ababa; Expert Interview July -2014, Kigali). From these findings, it is indicative that most of their cordial and conflictual relationship revolves around land. Some respondents observed that:

Communities fight to preserve access to scarce resources or to prevent another from gaining such access. Another problem is that even where land is available it is so expensive that only those who have a significant income can afford it. As a result, most of the recent strife in areas such as Mt Elgon is a striking example of conflict, ignited by population pressure and diminished land resources. Even marginally fertile land is becoming hard to find in many places, and economic conditions are often dire for the peasants (Expert Interview March-2015, Nairobi).

In similar manner, another respondent asserted that:

The reason why land increasingly becomes scarce is that many people in this area have many children while land does not increase. The big problem resides among children from poor families who become landless because their families have very small plots of land. Food production has failed to keep pace with population growth. The population was growing but there was little or no land for agricultural expansion (KI- April-2014, Kamachai).
In this way, the rising population has contributed to unsustainable land resource use resulting to conflict as is evident in the Mt Elgon conflict. In interviews on the subject, local administrative leaders were quick to point out that Mt Elgon’s demographics are an increasing source of concern, with the majority of the area’s population currently less than 30 years of age (*KI*- April-2014, Kamachai; *KI*-April-2014, Chewangoi). This is corroborated by the stunning statistics from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2009), which shows that Mt Elgon had severe demographic stress in the period leading to the 2006-2008 protracted conflicts. As a result, it is no surprise that the highest household composition at 7.7 members per family. Further estimates show that, 63.6 % of the population owns land at an average or 2 acres while 33.7% rents or leases the land (KNBS 2009).

Thus, this implies that an average of 7.7 household members depend on 2 acres of land, to avoid the establishment of slums as well as facilitate viable economic activities as per the government policy on land allocation. Based on a detailed FGD, it was noted that, with increasing population, a single village, that hosted 500 people for example in its initial spot, saw drastic expansion due to population growth and migration from other areas in search of better opportunities (*FGD*- August -2014, Soet). The research findings also showed that cases involving family divisions, and over-heated and endless land disputes, were common in the area (*KI*- Aug-2014, Cheptonon; *KI*- Oct-2014, Chepkurukur; *KI*- Aug-2014,
Makutano). As such, it was noted that displaced families are likely to have disputes on land division upon their return. (Expert Interview - March-2015, Nairobi). The rapid population growth is likely to worsen the conflict as it depicts a grim future for the local residents (KI4- April-2014, Chewangoi).

This finding is well articulated by Mwasserah (2008) who notes that the Soy being the majority in population demanded a bigger share of land that the government did not honor. According to the local reading, this is how the animosity and aggression began (KI4 Dec2013: Nairobi). Therefore, demand for limited land led to a conflict of cataclysmic proportions in Mt Elgon. From an in-depth interview on the subject with a local opinion leader, it was noted that by the time the government started the process of allocating land, the eligible families were more than those that had initially been considered (KI3- April-2014, Chewangoi). As a vivid illustration, it was reported that government had allocated a paltry 1,732 people land out of the over 7,500 people who had been living in the Chebyuk Settlement Scheme during phase three of allocation process. Under these circumstances, community livelihoods were limited to very small plots of land (KI23- Oct-2014, Chepkurukur).

The above findings echo a fairly conventional account by Simiyu (2008) who notes that “there were no reported conflicts between Soy and Ndorobo when the later were allocated Chepyuk phase I as more land was still available. The relationship
between the Sabaot and non-Sabaots was also cordial. However, as the non-Sabaots started owning land in Chepyuk through purchase, competition for land resource gained momentum. At the same time the Ndorobo were moved from Chepkitale trust land, which is 35,000 hectares, into Chepyuk scheme, which was 6,500 hectares. This resulted in the drastic reduction of available land for the entire population.” This finding is reminiscent of Markakis (1994), who underlines the role of economic resources in producing conflict in the Horn of Africa. According to him, regardless of the form it may take, the real cause of ethnic clash in this part of Africa is the desire to secure access to resources in the country concerned.

The study respondents observed that scarcity narrative was a result of the need to get additional grazing and agricultural lands that in turn led to protracted conflicts. (FGD3-August-2014, Soet). While most study experts acknowledge this rather dominating local narrative, they emphasize that the immediate causes of the conflict can be brought under three headings, namely, crop destruction by the pastoralists in the process of their movement, blocking of access by agriculturists to prevent movement of pastoralists and their animals, and the retaliation to earlier clashes (Expert Interview3-July-2014, Kigali; Expert Interview11-Oct-2014, Addis Ababa).

Apart from land issue, deforestation and general environmental degradation in Mt Elgon caused by pastoral use and poor farming methods are also causes of conflict
This is a clear indication that over time, an “ingenuity gap” is likely to develop because society is unable to deal with environmental scarcity. As such, the same may lead to social disarray and conflict (Expert Interview2-July -2014, Kigali). Dependence on access to scarce land has reinforced the vulnerability of the rural poor. In near unanimity, FGD participants noted that many poor families are a result of diminishing size of family land holdings. To cater for land scarcity, most people have encroached into national parks and forest reserve areas to satisfy their unmet demands for land (FGD1-August -2014, Kapsakwany; FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).

In addition, resource capture by elite groups and population pressure has contributed to unsustainable land use, such as cultivation on steep hillsides, shortening of fallow periods and deforestation to open additional land for farming. This has led to land degradation and with a growing population, per capita food production decreased as well (FGD1-August -2014, Kapsakwany; FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur). The rural peasantry in response devised a variety of strategies to strengthen their livelihoods, including complicity in violent conflict motivated by incitement from elite political leaders. One of the respondents reiterated that the rural peasantry was known to participate in conflict in the belief that land belonging to the displaced would become theirs (Expert Interview3-July -2014, Kigali).
Further field accounts of these conflicts pointed to climatic changes that have reduced the amount of viable land available for productive farming. It is pertinent to note that the nature and extent of conflicts often vary, depending on ecological and seasonal conditions. An interview with one old widow confirmed and amplified these claims as she recounted her childhood memories:

I recall my parents harvesting a lot from a relatively smaller plot of land than we do now from larger piece of land. We have used much of the land exhaustively. We worry for our children when we think of the future (KI9-June-2014, Chepkurukur).

This is further corroborated by responses from one of the opinion leaders in the study area, who noted that:

The key point in the conflict is that the pastoralists on one hand do not relate the number of their cattle to the grazing area available. They should practice proper methods of animal husbandry, but their priority is to have as many animals as possible. While on the other hand, the farmers practice archaic shifting cultivation instead of modern agriculture (KI20-Aug-2014, Cheptonon).

This observation is strongly supported by some Key informants (Expert Interview14-March-2015, Istanbul; Expert Interview10-March-2015, Nairobi) who both assert that when people cultivate land repeatedly through traditional methods, its biodiversity and fertility becomes reduced thereby deteriorating its farm
productivity. For greater clarity, they added that although not many conflicts have emerged as a result of this, more often than not, conflicts in such situations are nipped in the bud. However, in relation to Mt Elgon conflict, on a number of occasions, things have escalated resulting in violent confrontations (Expert Interview14-March-2015, Istanbul; Expert Interview10-March-2015, Nairobi).

This assertion is affirmed by FGD participants who noted that in order to keep the biodiversity of the soil, the Soy deferred the production land to be reserved for several years similar to the practice of shifting cultivation, presumably to recover the fertility and productivity of the land. Under such circumstances, when the formerly cultivable land remained uncultivated, it was soon covered by grasses and became forested. The following quote extracted from the FGD illustrates this:

During periods of drought, they took their livestock to our farms without consulting us. Farms and crops continued to be destroyed by livestock. When we reported this to the authorities, they just ignored it and no action was taken. So, villagers stopped trusting the government. There was no other means of airing their land grievances. The outcome here was the development of vicious cycles in land conflict. The farmers decided to form a traditional militia group for self-defense known as SLDF. That is how the fighting began (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).
This is similar to the findings of Homer-Dixon, who strongly notes that, “scarcity of renewable resources can contribute to civil violence, including insurgencies and ethnic clashes. In the coming decades the incidence of such violence will increase,” (1999).

Apart from increase in population, inequitable distribution of land and the controversial methods that the government had adopted in managing the land problem through resettlement schemes was mentioned as a factor fueling the conflict. The point here is that, communities often see allocations as unjust and a means of depriving them of ancestral lands. One key informant puts it this way:

Land scarcity developed not because there was too little to go around, but because of “a process of competitive exclusion by which some groups were increasingly squeezed off the land,” by the authorities. Then of course under such circumstance, it is proper to expect the outbreak of conflict, whenever there is favorable condition for it to surface (KI14-Aug-2014, Makutano).

Some experts on the topic that I interviewed emphasized that land contentions are rooted in the inability of governments to manage the conflicting legacies bequeathed by the different land tenure practices since pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence periods. (Expert Interview14-March-2015, Istanbul; Expert Interview8-July -2014, Kigali; Expert Interview11-Oct-2014, Addis Ababa). The land issue is worsened by the determination of powerful political elites who capture and ensure effective grip over the ownership and control of land. Struggles over
land are therefore played out as struggles to capture or retain power. On this, a civil society activist observed that opportunistic politicians manipulated local issues and fomented violence for electoral gain, but the tensions they manipulated were, to a large extent, land-related and long-standing (KI4- April-2014, Chewangoi).

This is well mirrored in the flawed Nyumba Kwa Nyumba (house to house) method of settlement of squatters, in the hope of garnering votes and endearing themselves to the electorate, politicians vying for elective seats used land as a campaign promise and more specifically with the promise of settling squatters in their households, as explained in the FGDs (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur; FGD3-August -2014, Soet). From this angle, one gets the impression that the concept of land and the way politicians and leaders manage and manipulate land settlements and distribution in Mt. Elgon, is at the core of the protracted conflicts.

The study also noted that government was less concerned with redressing root causes of rural deprivation of land. Notably, government failed to implement any substantive legal and policy reforms such as the Ndung’u report to balance inequities in the distribution of land, or other reforms to strengthen the land and resource rights of the rural poor and to prevent further capture of land by the wealthy (Expert Interview10-March-2015, Nairobi). Medard Claire in an interview with one of the news agency:
In spite of the official policy of land privatization and the issuing of title deeds in Kenya, this policy was never finalised in Chebyuk. The lack of official documents to prove land ownership did not prevent land transactions, however. Those who were given land by the government started in turn to allocate land to others. Some people borrowed, others rented, and others bought land (Interpress service notes).

This argument was strengthened by assertions that with no credible administrative structures to manage natural resources and with the laws governing the management being either contradictory or not properly aligned with other political and social structures, issues surrounding natural resources become violently contestable (Expert Interview 10-March-2015, Nairobi). This narrative is aptly shared and reinforced by some of Soy respondents who felt excluded, ignored, and discriminated against by the deliberate government decision to include the Mosop in Chepyuk III, which had been created solely for the Soy (FGD1-August-2014, Kapsakwany; FGD2-Dec-2014, Chepkurukur; FGD3-August-2014, Soet).

Most respondents to in-depth interviews as well as participants in the focus group discussions noted that some of the people were left landless and those who were lucky enough to get land lacked full legal ownership as the government failed to issue them with title deeds (FGD3-August-2014, Soet). on this, an outraged elderly
person who has seen the situation deteriorate over the years, with no end in sight, lamented:

The eviction notice did not consider the fact that the community had occupied the land since their history of settlement and some laid claim on that land as their ancestral even those who had met the requirements and had large tracks, were required to give up part of it for further subdivision and sharing with other families or other clans (KIb- June-2014, Chepkurukur).

On the same, another related account raised in a focus group discussion reveals same corollary:

In the period leading up to the conflict, we were treated as secondary to the Mosop and told to leave our properties and houses in which we lived to pave way for the resettlement of the Mosop. Because the situation had made us landless, we have no land for agricultural production. This precipitated the conflictual relations between the Mosop and us (FGD- August -2014, Soet).

From the foregoing, the inescapable finding is that the government’s insensitivity of the problem under reference, through unequal distribution of land led to the politicization of mistrust, intolerance, violence and acrimonious relations among different communities in Mt Elgon. Further evidence indicates that some of the squatters were not viable to be allocated land in the scheme because though they resided there, they were not genuine applicants and already had some land
elsewhere. In this context, they did not meet the criteria for benefiting in the settlement scheme as set out, but the governing body forced them in considering the rule of Nyumba Kwa Nyumba (*FGD*$_3$-August -2014, *Soet*).

In connection to the above, it was reported the Soy people who had originally settled on the land were missing out on the government list of the new land owners and instead land was given out to the Mosop, in a haphazard manner, often to the exclusion and at the expense of more deserving people-the Soy (*FGD*$_3$-August -2014, *Soet*). Importantly, in the open-coded responses, focus groups and semi-structured interviews, most of the respondents strongly held the view that the feeling of dissatisfaction prompted violent reaction from the aggrieved group by targeting people believed had been “favoured” in the land allocation (*KI*$_{19}$- Aug-2014, *Cheptoror*; *KI*$_{20}$- Aug-2014, *Cheptonon*).

From these experiences, some respondents felt exploited by the government in their effort to resettle the Mosop community in a land that did not belong to them. According to this thread of argument, this was the reason why the (Soy) formed the armed resistance group-Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF) against forced evictions from what they perceived to be their own land, in favour of the Mosop (Personal Interview, Dec 2013: Kapkateny) (*KI*$_{19}$- Aug-2014, *Cheptoror*; *KI*$_{20}$- Aug-2014, *Cheptonon*). At this stage, in what could be viewed as angry and frustrated voices, respondents painfully recalled that they had been dully vetted and
given allotment letters by the Chebyuk Land Task Force team; just to be shocked
that their names were missing from at the final list of allotees:

    Majority of us felt being exploited by the government in their effort to
    resettle the Ndorobo community in a land that did not belong to them. I
    remember this was the reason why the SLDF was formed to resist the forced
    evictions from what was perceived to be own land, in favour of the Mosop.

    (FGD₃-August -2016, Soet).

On this, some experts asserted that the evictions or missing out on allocations lists
by genuine families in each phase left some of them with unaddressed grievances
which later found expression in fierce territorial claims by ethnic groups (Expert
Interview₁₀-March-2015, Nairobi). Supporting the above views, FGD participants
concurred and stressed that under the circumstances of “unfair” land allocation, the
high point of the crisis was the decision by both the Soy and the Mosop to resort to
violence to further their interests (FGD₂-Aug -2016, Chepkurukur).

There is considerable evidence in these assertions going by the manner in which
the soy formed the SLDF led by Wycliffe Kirui Matakwei in late 2005 and Jason
Kipsangeiywo (Laibon) to fight against injustice and alleged discrimination in the
allocation of land while the Mosop formed the MDF to counter the SLDF (FGD₂-
Dec -2014, Chepkurukur; FGD₃-August -2014, Soet). This narrative is consistent
with the TJRC findings, which noted that the emergence of SLDF and other militia
groups to fight for land rights in Mt Elgon was precipitated largely by government failure to fully address the land related injustices that members of the Sabaot community have suffered since independence (TJRC, 2013).

This finding is similar to Harris and Reilly (1998) observation that the economic insecurity leads to conflicts where political power holders discriminate against some ethnic groups in resource distribution. In a similar fashion, recent political ecologists note that unlike land politics in many African countries, which often centers on use and abuse of ostensibly customary authority (and is thus “repressed” or bottled-up at the local level), the major land disputes in Kenya are focused on how the power of the central state has been used to allocate land (see Boone 2011b).

Building on the above inequitable and unjust land allocation narrative, study experts attribute the conflict to the absence of a comprehensive legal, policy and institutional framework for land governance and management. This is especially true in the context of a complicated and confusing land tenure regime defined by numerous pieces of sometimes discordant legislation and regulations governing different aspects of the land and the various land-based resources (Expert Interview 9-March-2015, Nairobi; Expert Interview 10-March-2015, Nairobi). Although there has been attempts to make land reforms, most of these have ended up creating far greater confusion, making this category of land conflict
one with profound ramifications on the community. Specifically, conflicting legacies bequeathed by the different land tenure practices that have existed over the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence periods in that:

The land tenure arrangements are laden with potentials that engender acrimonious intergroup relations, as they have been unable to resolve contradictions that have been bequeathed by traditional, western, and sometimes-religious land tenure systems (Expert Interview 9-March-2015)

It was also established that the then Land Act which gave power to the president to allocate land to anyone, irrespective of whether the land is occupied or not has also contributed to conflict. For instance, there was the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act, which gave the government powers to take over land from its owners for development (Expert Interview 10-May-2015, Nairobi). It is this line of logic that caused the inconsiderate eviction of the Mosop to give room for conservation of Mt Elgon National Park, without providing reasonable alternatives. Although, the recently established National Land Commission and the National and County Land Acts are seen as an opportunity for greater equity and consistency in the law. However, given that there are already turf conflicts between the new commission and the Ministry of Lands, it does not bode well (Expert Interview 9-March-2015, Nairobi; Expert Interview 10-March-2015, Nairobi).
To further buttress the land issue, some of the key informants alleged that the issue of contention arose out of poor demarcation of boundaries, perceived lack of deeds of ownership, favouritism and corruption in the establishment of Chepyuk settlement scheme and subsequent dynamic settlement process (KI11- June-2014, Soet; KI12- June-2014, Masahek). What is interesting to note is that, majority of those interviewed acknowledged that they lacked title-deed documents as proof of land ownership. This was particularly salient for Sabaot where one of them claimed that their ethnic group was the “only one in all of Kenya that has not been granted title deeds” for land that they have farmed for generations (KI22- Oct-2014, Lukhome; KI23- Oct-2014, Chepkurukur). For the above reasons, majority of them argued that they do not know what was meant by a land title-deed document, when asked if they hold a title deed. One respondents expressed that “most people in this area do not have those documents you are talking about; we do not even know what they are” ((KI22- Oct-2014, Lukhome).

In response to the same and in what would be seen to be an interesting twist of events, some experts were hesitant to attribute the conflict to land scarcity; something that tends to considerably weaken the case for land hunger and related grievance as the root cause of conflict. From this angle, there exist large tracts of prime land in the Protracted Mt Elgon areas owned by individuals and corporations. Basically, the point being emphasized is that, rational land predators would be expected to have targeted these farms. Surprisingly, the militia targeted none of
them. Instead the conflict occurred in the Chepyuk settlement schemes with small-scale farms but large populations, suggesting an objective of displacing large numbers of people. Importantly, it is also apparent that the grievances related to the alienation of land date back to colonial times and are not confined either to the Soy or Mosop sub clans. Medard Claire author of *Indigenous land claims in Kenya: A case study of Chebyuk, Mount Elgon district*, notes that:

> Located on the southern slopes of Mount Elgon, the area of Chebyuk is well watered and fertile. Ever since the forest was cleared in the 1970s, commercial crops such as maize, cabbages, onions and Irish potatoes have attracted many settlers. It has become an agricultural frontier for migrants mostly from within the ‘Sabaot’ community (part of the ‘Kalenjin’ grouping) across the Uganda-Kenya boundary. (2008)

Although it is sometimes distorted beyond recognition and reduced to a series of policy or technical issues, the land question represents one of those “won’t go away” conflict problems. Indeed, we can understand and appreciate the fact that land provides an inexhaustible account of the complexities, which surround the study area in regard to cases of conflicts from a resource factor point of view. But however intuitive that reasoning may be, a deeper look confirms that the problem of land certainly cannot be a decisive factor in explaining the protracted Mt Elgon conflict atrocities which took place in Mt Elgon. At the bottom line, the major question of this study remains, unfortunately, not fully answered.
In other words, the very fact that land could be characterized as an element and condition that facilitated the mobilization of grievances, there is little convincing evidence that land in itself is a sufficient cause of the protracted violence. The role of land resources and therefore natural resources must be properly equated with the very many other factors that characterize and affect the protracted conflicts in Mt Elgon; as such the study examines the contributory role of structural factors in the protracted Mt Elgon conflict in the next section.

3.4 Structural factors and Protracted Mt Elgon Conflict

For the purposes of furthering the debate on the nature of the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon and the drivers motivating it; it is important to understand the ambivalent significance of structural factors in the area and their effect on social relations. Before proceeding with this section, it suffices to note that as previously highlighted in the conceptual definitions, these are causes whose manifestations are made clear through the proximate and triggering causes of violence (Azar, 1986, Miese, 2003). In doing so, we particularly want to highlight the fact that, this situation has made it difficult for citizens to peacefully co-exist, and true to itself, there is a consensus of opinion among study experts that the protracted conflict crisis is not simply a “conflict crisis” but an explosion of structural violence deeply entrenched into the configuration of the Mt Elgon communities (Expert Interview 10-March-2015,
Importantly, from other interviews both with the local respondents and study experts, they seem to suggest that, even though there is currently relative peace in Mt Elgon, it is not guaranteed that this peace will endure the test of time, as long as the underlying structural causes remain insufficiently addressed (KI10- June-2014, Soet; KI22- Oct-2014, Lukhome; Expert Interview9-March-2015, Nairobi).

It needs to be pointed out here that at the core of the structural grievances as narrated by study respondents is the issue of poverty, to quote one of the study experts that “poverty tends to be highly correlated with conflict and fragility, which in turn feed into weak institutions and social instability, resulting in more poverty, conflict and fragility” (Expert Interview14-March-2015, Istanbul). It is also apparent that this point of view, is very popular and is largely adopted primarily by those working in the realm of humanitarianism; who advocate for promotion of development both as a right in itself and as an ingredient for community stability. It is not surprising therefore that the area is dotted with many NGOs, who uphold the idea that enhanced modernization, improved literacy, and increased investment in basic services such as education, health and agriculture are all elements that diminish occurrence of violence (KI13- June-2014, Masahek; KI14- Aug-2014, Makutano).

In this context, I observed that this argument is quite persuasive in the sense that chronic poverty is a key characteristic feature of the area based on a wide-range of social economic indicators conducive to the development of predatory violence.
There is ample evidence as presented by the local humanitarian officers that the widespread poverty has led to a relative decline in the well-being and social advancement of people particularly as reflected in large but unmeasured proportion of the population living on less than US$1 per day. The highly skewed income distribution, inadequate delivery of social services and run-down infrastructure services remain serious problems (*KI*13- June-2014, Masahek; *KI*14- Aug-2014, Makutano). Additional insight from the study experts showed that the chronic poverty serves as major source of resentment that worsens with time. This forms the basis for the eruption and renewal of protracted conflicts in the region (*Expert Interview*13-March-2015, Addis Ababa; *Expert Interview*14-March-2015, Istanbul).

Poverty and destitution are at a record peak in Mt Elgon region which conjures up images of emaciated children as a result of famine and gross human rights violations. During field work, a young man pointed out that he has five siblings who depend on him after losing their parents during the conflict, yet he can only find work two days a week if he was lucky. It was also observed that there was an irreconcilable gap between the rich and the poor. This was exemplified on one hand by large tracts of prime land owned by individuals and corporations; while on the other hand are the many squatters whose life remains an all-consuming struggle for basic survival. What all of this seems to suggest is that the impoverishment and deliberate cowing of the population; has been used as a weapon of violence (*Expert Interviews*8-July -2014, Kigali). Therefore, the perception of the relative economic
underdevelopment and unequal access to resources in the area, as well as vast differences in standards of living compared to other parts of the country is one factor that tells a lot about the protracted conflict. In this case, when people perceive their situation as unjust and that they are worse off than their immediate neighbours, there is a strong incentive towards violence.

In light of the preceding findings, the resulting intra-regional variations in economic development have in turn sustained deep seated grievances, sometime causing the kind of conflict witnessed in 2006-2008. Correspondingly, there is a feeling of frustration about inadequate roads and transport facilities, poor access to markets and to agricultural support and inputs. A keen observer will note that the number of health care centers and schools are only handful; accompanied by declined school enrolments and low adult literacy (FGD1-August-2014, Kapsakwany; FGD3-August-2014, Soet).

In relation to the above, commitments to broader rural development seem to be generally weak and disorganized. From interviews with local administrators, it was evident that provision of social services and infrastructural facilities still lay at an infant stage. During the field visits it was clearly observed that key roads such as Masaek-Kipsigon and Kopsiro-Chepyuk are in deplorable conditions. Thus, there is almost complete lack of infrastructure, including no paved trunk road system. These clearly demonstrate that the area is not easily accessible and remains impassable during the rainy seasons (KI27-Dec-2014, Kaptaboi; KI25-Oct-2014, Soet).
Chepkurukur; KI12- June-2014, Masahek). Furthermore, there are increasing concerns that most households in the area have no electricity or power grid, only a handful of public water and sanitation systems, and the complete absence of social infrastructures throughout Mt Elgon (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur; FGD3-August -2014, Soet). The significance of such circumstances is that the entire region remains trapped in economic isolation (Expert Interview3-July -2014, Kigali).

Similar narratives are shared with a majority of elderly respondents, who felt frustrated because of government deliberate delay in addressing certain problems haunting the society since independence. Importantly, most respondents stated that frustration among the poor has created a growing tendency to use violence as a viable means to correct the situation, to quote one vocal FGD participant, “the Operation Okoa Maisha failed to restore the glory of Mt Elgon, instead the conflict destroyed our people’s pride and dignity. No enemy man, married woman or very small child was spared” (FGD1-August -2014, Kapsakwany).

To further buttress the above assertion; experts have it that after such a deadly operation, people need to see the restoration of infrastructure, institutions, and society for the animosity against the government to fade away, otherwise the conflict will persist. Importantly to note at this stage is that, there is a prevalent and well-founded perception of neglect and marginalization. Study respondents spoke in near unison that the area has not attracted sufficient investment attention to fully exploit the area’s development potential, owing to its peripheral location and the
patterns of population settlement. In this cycle of violence, respondents castigated past and present area leaders for failing to establish good development mechanisms, forging community integration and promoting real economic progress, through deliberate and articulated policies (FGD1-August-2014, Kapsakwany).

The inappropriate development policies, largely carried over from the colonial era, have exacerbated resource scarcity, resulting in weak economic performance that is worsened by the application of inappropriate technologies and underdeveloped human resources. Throughout the discussion, it was underscored that financial resources that could stimulate the development of non-traditional resources and diversify the economy have not done so. Instead, owing to the protracted conflicts in the area, the emphasis of resource allocation remains focused on security, and not on the much-needed development (Expert Interview1-March-2013, Istanbul; Expert Interview2-July-2014, Kigali).

Other interview narratives tend to find greater explanatory power in the structural forces as a result of low level of functional specialization in the area. This factor can be explained more precisely based on plain pastoralism and farming distinction. The dominant activities as earlier highlighted that serve as sources of livelihood for both communities are crop farming and pastoralism. The Soy residents practice both traditional crop and animal farming while the Mosop population is largely pastoralist (KI14-Aug-2014, Makutano; KI11-June-2014, Soet). This observation
thus serves to highlight the fact that the economic practices serve the only purpose of sustaining the subsistence way of life (Expert Interview-March-2015, Nairobi).

In line with the above argument, apart from subsistence production, ample evidence seems to suggest that the communities have no other major source of income. With the protracted conflicts, findings from the focus group discussions and observations indicated that crop production had plummeted, mainly due to displacement and reduced access to farmland. The assertion here confers that such narrow base of local economy traps both communities in a competition for similar resources, particularly land. In abstract, all respondents in the FGD share the idea that the economic basis of the communities largely accounts for the structural causes of the conflict (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).

This concern was shared by key informants who also noted that majority of the people today have become paupers. This is as a result of exclusive dependence on agriculture at a time when its practice cannot sufficiently sustain the livelihood of communities for reasons of natural scarcity, population pressure and loss of biodiversity. The limitations involved in there, easily set the ground for competition (KI27- Dec-2014, Kaptaboi; KI28- Dec-2014, Kaptaboi). Closely related is destruction of resources that is done intentionally during conflict. As revealed during the FGD, the protagonists indulge themselves in burning houses, stores and destroying crops as part of a strategy to prohibit each other from expanding into the holdings of one’s own territory (FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).
However, it was argued that the individual and collective reasons for engaging in conflict tend to distil down to lack of opportunities (Expert Interview -July -2014, Kigali). Respondents spoke in near unison that the rampant poverty was manifested by hunger; a lack of education and skills; mass unemployment and general lack of economic growth and social development were significant factors aggravating the conflict. This also increased the chances of young people being drawn into violence as both perpetrators and victims. More worryingly is that, there is no prospect that this situation was likely to change for the better in the near future (FGD1-August - 2014, Kapsakwany; FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).

Furthermore, based on the semi-structured interviews with the youth respondents, there was a common feeling that the poor prospects of schooling and employment, as well as the lack of channels for political participation, has made joining militia gangs a good opportunity to gain some form of training and employment. (KI22- Oct-2014, Lukhome; KI23- Oct-2014, Chepkurukur). The above assertion was further strengthened by information from study experts who note that:

The long neglect of the youth development sector has resulted in youth restlessness, militancy, and unemployment. If this situation is not properly addressed may lead to insecurity and chaos hence the need for a comprehensive plan and programmes for youth development (Expert Interview -March-2015, Addis Ababa).
In this cycle of violence and of particular relevance at this point, the study sought to highlight the youth militarization dimension as a structural factor of the protracted conflict, explicitly focusing on the role of youths in conflict. While not denying the disturbing facts, it was noted that perceptions played an important role. Being a youth in Mt Elgon is widely and consistently perceived as problematic. Key informants, study experts and focus group discussants reiterated that youths were in deep trouble and enmeshed in violence. In this connection, they argued that no structural narrative of the conflict could be accurate without including the role played by the youth, a key emerging and increasingly salient demographic group. This narrative is further fostered by the increased participation of the youth in the protracted conflict, due to their growing resentment (Expert Interview13-March-2015, Addis Ababa; KI14-Aug-2014, Makutano; FGD3-August-2014, Soet). Key informants observed that the high recruitment of youths can be partly explained by such economic and educational constraints.

With the prevailing marginalized circumstances on the other hand, those recruited into militias, their membership served as a ready-made ticket to wealth (KI27-Dec-2014, Kaptaboi). In this respect, as underlined during the in-depth discussions, despite the crackdown on the youth militias and gangs, these groups continue to increase as shown below:

The silence of the guns in this region is not a symbol of peace prevailing.

By deploying hundreds of military, police and spies in Mt Elgon, the
government was treating the symptoms of the disease. Most youths are still bitter because the issues that forced them to join the SLDF have not been resolved, \((FGD_3{-}August{-}2014, Soet)\).

This view is corroborated by a Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation monitoring report which shows that there are new militia groups in Kenya and they are on the increase \((KNDR, 2010)\). These assertions were further corroborated by sentiments of discontent and frustration among the already disfranchised youths as noted below:

The low number of employment opportunities as well as the type and distribution of jobs remain a major source of resentment for us youths. The local Leadership is not proactive to help us get jobs \((KI_{10}{-}June{-}2014, Soet)\).

Various interviews attest to the community’s state of despair, that importantly shows strong links to youth participation in the protracted conflict through militarization. For instance, consider the following comments in response to the question “Why do youths participate in militia activities?”

Every young person is labeled a Militia even when they are not. This is what makes us very aggressive. The authorities should address historical injustices and dialogue with us instead of killing, arresting and harassing all
youth in the name of belonging to outlawed sects (*KI*<sub>20</sub>- Aug-2014, Cheptonon).

This inevitably indicates that the youths have a range of grievances. As reiterated by study experts; the continued exclusion of the youth not only means that a major portion of the area’s human capital is not productively engaged, but it also makes it the most disaffected, and therefore the most vulnerable to political mobilization (*Expert Interviews-July -2014, Kigali*).

At this stage, it is important to underscore that the general consensus among study respondents and the general impression conveyed across the various respondents’ accounts was that the area faces an uncontrolled population growth resulting in a “youth bulge”; like many parts of Kenya, that has been used to ignite fanaticism and in the end unleashing terror and mayhem (*KI*<sub>3</sub>- April-2014, Chewangoi; *KI*<sub>1</sub>-April-2014, Kamachai). These findings were consistent with Nagin and Land’s (1993) study which noted that during certain age periods, an individual’s possibility of being involved in criminal activities increases. Additionally, these age groups are also more likely to be victimized than the others (Cohen & Land, 1987; Gould *et al.*, 1998). In their study Gould *et al.*, (1998) looked at the effect of age on the crime rate and they found age was significantly related to crime and insecurity.

The prevalence of the protracted conflict is also partly due to the deterioration and breakdown of important vehicles of social controls that characterize the traditional African society. This is the family, education, law, religion and political system that
cared for the well-being of all citizens. In this respect, the structure and system of ensuring social harmony in which the elders play a vital role as arbitrators in family matters, settling disputes within communities and passing on cultural traditions and values has seriously been eroded (Expert Interview 6-July -2014, Kigali; Expert Interview 14-March-2015, Istanbul).

The above explanation is also very popular among elderly respondents who painstakingly and diligently recounted their painful experiences of previous bloody confrontations. This complements the reduced sacred character of the respect given to the elderly and their authority explanation (KI 1- April-2014, Kamachai; KI 7- April-2014, Kapkateny). From this perspective, it appears that the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as negotiations between community elders, are also less effective, as well-armed young men now often wield power. Taken together, the malfunctioning of the above important institutions increased conflicts in Mt Elgon. The following quote extracted from the FGD illustrates this:

The elderly were respected by all and played a key role whenever there was a crisis. Thus, when a conflict degenerated into armed violence, an appeal would usually be made to a third party of mature years that enjoyed the consideration and respect of all to calm the tension and reconcile the combatants (FGD 2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur).

To take another example:
We were once here to teach the young ones. We gave lessons at community fire, now we are not much more than witnesses to history and with the increasing conflicts, even though we fought the British, but the current conflicts has made it difficult. However, we no longer have the strength to keep the tribe together, \((FGD_2-Dec\, -2014,\, Chepkurukur)\).

Staying with the FGD findings, the existence of warrior cultures among the Mt Elgon communities cannot be gainsaid. This assertion was made in relation to the cultural beliefs and practices which sanction the use of violence. These perceptions are based on the fact that there is no other means of airing grievances other than the use of violence \((FGD_2-Dec\, -2014,\, Chepkurukur)\). Furthermore, it was established that the attitude of the communities that treasures the tradition of vendetta simply produces and reproduces a vicious circle of human casualties as the cultural set up cannot enable them bring the violence to a natural halt \((Expert\, Interviews-July\, -2014,\, Kigali)\).

Of particular interest was the expressions of hostility and cultural acceptance of livestock raiding, which plays a significant role in providing the rationale for creating or perpetuating the conflict \((FGD_3-August\,-2014,\, Soet)\). However, additional insight showed that cattle raiding on large scale had declined considerably due to strong legal actions. From this perspective, one also gets the impression that the presence of small arms contributes to the protracted conflicts and makes them deadlier. One explanation given by a community elder during a
key informant interview is that violence between communities over cattle rustling or grazing rights has historically occurred in Mt Elgon. Traditionally, conflicts were fought with spears and sticks (KI20- Aug-2014, Cheptonon). However, in one-way or another, this has changed owing to the proliferation of small arms. In the old days, weapons were more or less traditional. Mostly, spears and sticks were used. However, currently, automatic weapons like AK-47 are largely available.

Although this may be an overstatement, it was emphasized in nearly every interview and FGD that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has increased the proclivity of the protracted conflicts in the area. The basis for this argument is explained by the fact that the armaments easily trigger violence particularly when members of the two communities face each other over contentious issues (FGD3-August -2014, Soet). It was revealed that the smuggling of arms and even whereabouts of markets were common and even known to security personnel (FGD3-August -2014, Soet). In line with this argument, this assertion demonstrates the absolute lapse in law and order that characterize impunity for criminal gangs that prevail in Mt Elgon. This is because with a seemingly constant supply of smuggled arms at their disposal, many groups have been able to prolong conflict, with disastrous effects on their immediate communities and beyond (Expert Interview13-March-2015, Addis Ababa).

As was further demonstrated by study experts; Kenya shares porous borders with some of the most politically unstable countries in Africa such as Somalia and South
Sudan. In addition, Kenya’s long and isolated borders with Tanzania, Uganda, and Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia and its 536 km coastline are difficult to patrol owing to limited resources and insufficient training. Importantly, the poor and corrupt policing of the borders between Kenya and its neighbours have facilitated the influx of large quantities of small arms into Kenya. Individuals have been able to acquire weapons for overt criminal purposes. In this regard, the fact that the borders are not properly and effectively policed means that arm traffickers and bandits find easy entry points along the porous borders (Expert Interview 9-March-2015, Nairobi; Expert Interview 10-March-2015, Nairobi).

Staying with this thread of argument, possession of weapons is considered as an obligatory tool of self-protection and attacks. As such, the residents of the area are prompted to acquire firearms at any cost. Moreover, there was considerable evidence from FGDs that the wide availability and usage of armaments structurally hampers the culture of deliberation and tolerance as individuals can easily resort to the use of weapons when disagreements arise (FGD 1-August-2014, Kapsakwany). In further illustrating this thread of proliferation of SALW narrative, in-depth discussions with the key informants revealed that the government’s sporadic attempts at forcible disarmament have failed abysmally and only served to fuel local antagonisms (KI 23-Oct-2014, Chepkurukur; KI 24-Oct-2014, Chewango). This is in part due to the fact that the disarmaments are often ill informed and never
tailored to address the underlying conflict causes. Common to all these narratives, the failure to address the ways in which modern weaponry enters the region has meant that as soon as conflict and armed violence subsides in one area, it flares up in others (Expert Interview 11-Oct-2014, Addis Ababa).

Another issue is the rise of banditry activities in the area. More telling in this regard is the fact that banditry is largely characterized by armed criminal gangs, waylaying travelers, and relieving the victims of their possessions. According to the local administrator, this has been a cause of increasing concern. Most FGD participants noted having been victims of bandits, especially road banditry at night. Other findings from the focus group discussions and field observations indicated that the banditry incidents have had severe consequences, in the sense that it has scared many Kenyans from other regions from coming to Mt Elgon to participate in the search for solutions to end conflict and insecurity. Many of those come to live in fear and their movements are restricted that they are unable to engage in any serious developmental activity (FGD2-Dec-2014, Chepkurukur; FGD3-August-2014, Soet).

3.5 Chapter Summary

From the above field findings, it is beyond contention that a complex situation prevails in contemporary Mt Elgon. The subject understandably evokes strong emotions, and many people consequently approach it with a strong priori lens. They
seek to prove through the tragic events of 2006-2008 their preferred causality, to blame their favorite enemy, and to demonstrate their pet theory. As a result, many mono-causal explanations prevail, whether of the causes of the conflict, the nature of ethnic polarization and stereotyping, or the role of natural resources especially land, not forgetting structural factors. The emerging themes however notwithstanding, it leaves some questions unanswered on how this factor when combined in a particular constellation reinforce or neutralize each other to produce and sustain the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon. To discuss the Mt Elgon conflict without addressing this crucial question is to leave much of the story untold. It is in this context that the next chapter attempts to analyse and discuss the key factors and how they neutralize or reinforce each other to cause and sustain the Mt Elgon conflict.
CHAPTER FOUR: CAUSES AND CONTINUATION OF MT ELGON

CONFLICT: AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

4.0 Introduction

Protracted conflicts are by the very nature complex, since they involve many stakeholders under a wide range of conditions and circumstances. Causal explanations of such conflicts need to take cognizance of the intensity, actors and issues that has transformed over time. These may be long-term causes and immediate factors that lie within decision-making power of stakeholders. Gurr and Harff (1994) agree that there is no comprehensive and widely accepted theory of the causes and consequences of conflicts. Rather, there are approaches and hypotheses that seek to explain particular aspects of conflicts. Thus, any attempt to develop theoretical explanations for causes of armed conflicts must involve analysis of a myriad of variables, which interact to generate and sustain such conflicts (Smith, 2004).

In the context of the protracted Mt Elgon conflict, it emerged that past scholarship and analyses do not agree on a single theoretical and factual account of the causes of the conflict. Having said this, the best approach in uncovering the causes and reasons for the longevity of the conflict is to look at the interaction of key variables such as Ethnic polarization and stereotyping; struggle for natural resources, especially land; Structural factors such as poverty, youth militarization,
proliferation of SALW and the culture of violence rooted in cattle rustling; and how these factors are manipulated in a manner that not only causes but also sustains the conflict. The chapter therefore undertakes a deeper analysis of the causal factors related to the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon as earlier identified.

4.2 Ethnicity and Ethnic Stereotyping
From the available literature, Ethnicity and ethnic stereotyping has taken a central stage in the politics of many African countries to the extent that current political upheavals, civil wars, massive displacements and misery is attributed to group grievances and confrontation (Stewart 2000). Most protracted conflicts in the developing world take place within intra-state, even though they have not been immune to outside interference. Those in the conflict belong to the same ethnic affiliation. So how does this observation bear on the explanation of the protracted Mt Elgon Conflict? Where, for instance, both the Soy and Mosop belong to the Sabaot sub-tribe of larger Kalenjin community (Lynch, 2009). In this regard, and as shown from the previous chapters, there is an impression that at the core of the conflict discourses, the parties involved are not only ethnically different, but also ethnic difference is central to the conflict.

Similarly, there is a tendency to attribute the actions of the warring parties to primordial ethnic connotations, where people tend to prefer members of their own group and, in some cases, have active antipathy toward those who are not members.
This makes the protracted conflict the inevitable result. In this connection, the fact that ethnic identity and stereotyping has been linked to the protracted conflict has made the subject a dominant theme in the study of the Mt Elgon conflict. At a superficial level, one could say that, no work is deemed scholarly that does not consider the prominence or relevance of ethnic identity and stereotyping in its analysis of Mt Elgon conflict.

The result of such interest in ethnic identity and stereotyping, which is proportional to the high level of ethnic consciousness in the Mt Elgon society, is the legion of literature on ethnic identity and stereotyping, making a critique a huge task. As observed by Brown, ethnicity and culture were until mid-1970s, relegated to the status of “epi-phenomena” and periphery by dependency, Marxist and development theorists on the notion that conflict is a natural phenomenon because, “people seem to trust and prefer those of their own cultural group, while feeling more distant from, and distrustful of, those of other cultural groups,” (Brown, 1989).

The above claims invite thorough analysis, but first what do we make of the above argument? Is it really “natural” for people to divide their world into neatly separated groups, producing a particular “lay” categorizations? If yes, this assertion has profound implications both for the likelihood of peace in the world and for what might be done to promote and achieve it. But again, is it really correct? Do ethnic divisions inevitably generate violence? Or is such a presupposition merely another
patronizing and imposed essentialism, which downgrades people’s capacity for complexity and change? In fact, a more urgent question is why, on one hand, are these conflicts so frequent, and how, on the other hand, have some multiethnic societies managed to co-exist peacefully among the various groups, despite considerable tensions at times?

The above questions are informed by the fact that there is vast evidence world over indicating that it is not necessarily the most ethnically diverse countries that are the most prone to violent conflict (Linder, 1994). In fact, the paradox is that Africa’s high degree of ethnic diversity, which is widely blamed for causing violent conflict, is a source of safety for the most heterogeneous countries. For example, countries such as Switzerland, Belgium, Malaysia and more closer home is Tanzania— a numerically diverse country compared to other East African countries, yet the country is not as ethnically polarized as it enjoys relative peace and stability; compared to the least diverse countries that are the most unstable or violent (Somalia, Southern Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Sri Lanka).

In line with this thinking, Stein (1996) makes an important observation by pointing out that, “if the primordial observation is correct, then conflict would occur at all times under all conditions,” an argument that is further supported by Ganguly, who notes, that if we view groups’ historical and current realities as a result of pre-
determined or “primordial” factors, then, “the road is open to exclusivist, homogeneous nations that in our ethnically mixed, fluid, changing world require desperate policies of deportation and ethnic cleansing to secure,” (Ganguly, 1995).

Literature from the works of some of the most important scholars of the region comes a nuanced reading that seems to be well grounded scientifically. Pioneer scholars, including Ogot (1967), Were (1967), Muriuki (1977), Ochieng (1974), Mwanzi (1977), Aseka (1989) among many others (cited in Onyango, 2008) have enriched our historical knowledge on individual ethnic communities that occupy present Kenya. Their studies have emphasized the fact that linguistically connected groups lived in small politically independent clans (or in small groups); that were scattered across very wide areas, with very loose ties between them. They lived separated from each other by space and geographical features. For survival purposes, these clans often forged interdependence relations with their closest neighbors, with whom they shared the same ecosystem and pertinent social features of human interactions like kinship through marriage.

Therefore, the historical evidence collected from oral traditions of different communities in Mt Elgon, indicate that some of these interactions usually led to whole groups losing some of the identity attributes that are religiously held onto by ethnologists such as language, some customary practices such as circumcision,
naming systems, and foods. These were not considered as very vital for the group survival. As noted by Doz (1998), several reasons would from time to time force people to move and find new homes; drought, floods, pestilence, invasions, and family conflicts.

Through the historical process of encounter and interaction, there were evolving ethnic communities that were neither definitive nor pure but hybridized in nature (Ochieng, 1974). This process of interaction was underway with the arrival of colonialists. What perhaps needs to be emphasized from the contributions of the above pioneer historical studies is that, first; the evolutionary process in Kenya predates the histories of the present-day inhabitants. Secondly, that the ethnic composition of the present country Kenya is as a result of a crystallization of many centuries of interaction between the various peoples and ethnic groups.

In this respect and more specifically in terms of the case study, brilliant books by Were (1967a; 1967b), provides a detailed account on how by the second half of the 19th century Bungoma and Mt. Elgon districts were settled. In reference to the different communities inhabiting Mt Elgon area, Were concludes that the Bukusu and the Sabaot are basically the result of two historical processes, namely, ethnic division and ethnic integration. He hypothesizes that Bukusu and Sabaot were the same people and the Bukusu were originally Kalenjin. This argument is closely
supported by Kakai (2000) who notes that Bukusu, Sabaot and even Tachoni lived side-by-side and interacted through trade, intermarriage and cultural activities.

Historical evidence has also shown that the Bukusu adopted the practice of circumcision from contact with the Kalenjin neighbours at Mount Elgon (Were, 1967). As earlier alluded, these interactions were so intensive that they sometimes resulted in whole groups merging into larger ones and losing the original attributes such as language and customs, or others breaking up and propagating into smaller units. The case in point is the “Ndorobo” territorial claim to land appears both in Kenya and in Uganda. Kakai (2000) notes that the importance of peaceful relations among different ethnic identities while observing that the Bukusu and the Sabaot share clans and linguistic aspects, history of origin, cultural and economic ties. As is evident from the scholarly discussions, due to increasing contacts, the Mt Elgon community culture has both Bantu and Nilotic affinities. Some of their lexicon and personal names are cultural borrowings from each other.

There is also the fact that ethnic identities and boundaries, including myths of common origin, are fluid and subject to continuous construction and reconstruction. For instance, frequent fluctuations in population from neighbouring Uganda communities and Pokots on the Kenyan side were reported during the study. In addition, I encountered numerous cases of cooperation and harmonious
relationships among the communities. I discovered, for example, that intermarriages are common among all sub-tribes despite persistent prejudices. There were stories of friendships across different groups that had weathered the storms of violent conflicts and remained steadfast. It was also established that there were awkward instances of people who didn’t know which sub-tribe they belonged to until it was pointed out to them by others during the FGD.

The above makes one wonder how people can be ethnically classified under such circumstances. Consequently, it becomes even hard to explain how the relationship between tribes or sub-tribes can suddenly turn from cordial to unreasoned hostility and violence. Viewed in this light therefore, the very fact that an area has different ethnic, communal, religious, and racial groups does not make division and conflicts inevitable. Such primordial argument overlooks the peaceful consolidation that has resulted from the ability of diverse groups living together. It can be argued that ethnic diversity helps rather than impedes the emergence of stable development as it necessitates intergroup bargaining processes. These raises serious questions and challenges the view that ethnic difference perpetuates protracted conflict while it creates harmony among those who share similar elements of ethnicity.

On the basis of the observations made above, the appropriate and most significant question to confront at this point is: Is traditional hatred narrative the answer to the
causes of the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon? Moreover, we have to ask the more substantial question: Does focusing on ethnic differences or similarities of people in Mt Elgon region give us a good understanding of the nature of protracted conflicts? What needs to be done to contain them? While seeking answers to these questions, it is important to state that primordial ties are critical to causal relationship of the ethnic identity and stereotyping. Understanding the nature of the protracted conflicts as something that is ingrained in ethnic groups and cannot be changed is a simplified view of a complex problem. This prevents those who build peace to demonstrate that ethnic animosities exist in combination with other factors and that addressing each dimension of the problem is necessary to resolve protracted conflicts.

Importantly, confining explanations of protracted conflicts solely to primordial causes not only implies a degree of ignorance and prejudice towards the societies affected by conflict but also at best incomplete and at worst incorrect in understanding the nature of the protagonists in the conflict and how they are defined. In this sense, it is not accurate to claim that if “one is invariably and always a Sabaot, a Bukusu, or Teso” and if “ethnic divisions and tensions are “natural,” then little or nothing can be done to prevent or resolve protracted conflict. This prompts us to infer that ethnic identity and stereotyping by and of itself does not predispose a society to protracted conflict.
Although the study objective is neither primarily to pose critics against the earlier scholarships nor to underestimate the immense impact of ethnic identity in the protracted Mt Elgon conflict, it merely emphasizes the need for a more balanced debate and commentary on the parties of the conflict and how they are defined. This will in turn help us understand their interest, motivations and ultimately the nature of the conflict by arguing that a single construct like ethnic identity and stereotyping cannot fully explain the events and social processes in Mt Elgon, including the horrendous massacres of 2006-2008.

We must therefore move beyond simplistic discussions of “ancient hatreds” to deal with one of the most difficult issues in the analysis of protracted conflicts (Kasfir, 1979; Newman, 1991) by posing the question: Is there any other explanations that would capture these situations better? What can cause such a harmonious multi-ethnic society to quickly degenerate into protracted conflict? It is at this juncture that I argue that the protracted conflicts should be understood contextually beyond the common thoughts advanced above. These points out to one thing: ethnic identity and stereotyping is not apparently the cause, but rather a consequence, of change in the social, economic and political arena (Brown, 1989). A clash of interest of the exploiters belonging to different ethnic groups and the masses in general precipitates the ethnic hostility. It can be argued that, to a large extent, what
has been called ethnic conflict is elite-driven conflict. This implies that ethnic differences are interjected into political loyalties, and ethnic identities are politicized in such a way that they shape political process (Smith, 2004).

The question we need to ask at this point is: Why should there be such a direct relationship between politics and protracted conflict? In answering this critical question, and based on the field findings, it must be stressed that protracted conflict takes on an ethnic dimension because of the manipulative behaviour of politicians for their own selfish gains such as favoritism and rewarding resources to specific ethnic groups in exchange for their loyalty while neglecting others. This creates feelings of relative deprivation, discontent and resentment, which ultimately becomes a potent source of conflict. Retaliatory attacks between armed groups, or armed groups and security forces, can then occur, leading to a continuing cycle of violence. This observation is articulated by Gurr (1970) who notes that ethnic diversity should be understood to cause conflicts in so far as it fosters competition between groups expected and actual access to resources and political power.

It is also within this context that scholars such as Kandeh argue that ethnicity is a multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon. One of its instrumental attributes is that it forms the basis for political and social organization, a mechanism used for elite domination than as an emancipatory and resource mobilization for the interest of
the people (Kandeh, 1992). Accordingly, Kaufman notes that “belligerent leaders stoke mass hostility; hostile masses support belligerent leaders, and both together threaten other groups, creating a security dilemma which in turn encourages mass hostility and leadership belligerence,” (Kaufman, 1996).

To this end, ethnicity has become a strategy and means for mobilization where the ruling elites, often members of an ethnic cleavage use repression and marginalization against other groups in order to maintain a strong grip on power and resources. Further supporting this view is Neil Devota (2005), who notes that political entrepreneurs determined to attain and maintain power often place their personal prejudices above inter-ethnic coexistence or the national interest and promote ethnic outbidding. This generates a feeling of relative deprivation on the part of the groups affected and spurs social discontent which provides the motivation and drive for collective violence.

The dynamics of this situation are such that the group in power mobilizes for support using ethnicity to maintain power while the relatively deprived groups will tend to resort to conflict in the absence of amicable redress, by also mobilizing through ethnicity in order to remove those in power who are perceived as the source of their frustration and deprivation. Such situations as depicted above, then results in a vicious cycle of violence in which the parties to the conflict use the discourse
of group hatred to further mobilize on ethnic lines. The protracted conflicts that have bedeviled many parts of the world should be viewed in this light. In reference to the case study, an analysis of the contemporary ethnic dimensions in the protracted Mt Elgon context should begin with a consideration of the colonial state and ethnic realms that shaped and nurtured it. This should be done with a particular emphasis on both the tactics used by the colonizer to subdue native populations, and decolonization, resulting in the conceptualization of the nation-state.

To recap what was mentioned above, the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon in which ethnicity plays a significant role can be traced to the colonial period when the colonial system and processes of state formation were based on the colonial ideology and culture of divide and rule, thereby not only politicizing pre-existing ethnic divisions and privileging one group over others but also led to the reification of local tribal political institutions and loyalties. In the words of Menkhaus (1998), “such divide and rule tactics facilitated the consolidation of an ethnic basis of support, as well as the creation of constituencies of conflict.” Yet, more significantly, as noted by Thomson (2000), this period which started with the Berlin conference of 1884-85, witnessed the division of African societies into political units called states with clearly defined boundaries. Ironically these boundaries split the traditional social structures, consequently ignoring ethnic cohesiveness, economic potential and distribution of natural resources.
Within these states, further subdivision was made whereby districts were created with boundaries drawn on the basis of the concept of the tribe which was an invention of the colonial masters and not from the people making up these units. The natives in a particular area with more or less similar characteristics would be classified together designated as an administrative unit under the jurisdiction of a ‘tribal’ chief or headman. This process of classifying people together, moreover in demarcated areas, was often accompanied by the application of native registration procedures. The purpose of registration was not only aimed at knowing the persons in the zones, but also to track and control their movements outside their ‘home’ areas which eventually led to the creation of ethnic identity.

The arbitrary manner in which these boundaries were created and the arbitrary nature by which previously independent communities were brought within one administrative unit encouraged competition for resources and ethnic tension. As such, the point being emphasized is that the imposed boundaries for the most part ignored cultural patterns in the colonized societies, because after all, the colonialist was not interested in the formation of a state on the notion of western structure, but rather for expansionism, quest for markets, imperial aggrandizement, strategic reasons and extraction of capital. In this context, as pointed out by Simiyu (2008), the Sabaot community is situated in Western Province, with groups with whom they
share no cultural ties. They were furthermore initially administrated together with the relatively populous Bukusu, so that they formed the minority group. At the same time the Kalenjin, with whom they shared a cultural and political affinity, formed part of a neighbouring province, and were accordingly administrated separately.

Wolfe (1969) further analyses the role of colonialism in creating a cultural mythology that informed the ethnic ideology of the different communities in Mt Elgon, and the role of this mythology in causing conflict. It was established in the course of the study that on the eve of British rule, the Bukusu and the Sabaot were composed of several quasi-sovereign clans. The British established a central authority over all these peoples by regrouping various clans and sub-clans into bigger administrative units (sub-locations and locations). As noted further by Kakai (2000), the expropriation of land by the colonialists, in order to administer the Bukusu/Sabaot as a cultural group, dispossessed some ethnic groups of their ancestral land and encouraged territorial divisions and the polarization of people into culturally distinct groupings.

Soon after the partitioning exercise, colonialist moved quickly to assert its authority and influence in the territory. This was necessary in order to deter competing rivals from taking over on one hand, but also to identify and establish alliances with preferred natives through whom colonial rule would be extended to the rest of the
territory. Categorizing, and sorting out natives by forming a typology of different groups and authoritatively defining and dictating the rules of the game; what was and wasn’t permitted, was a prerequisite for ease of administration.

Within this sorting process, the colonial state visibly created new categories of “identity” and that “Ethnonyms in especially among the Sabaot, such as the Soy and Mosop clans. As explained in the TJRC (2013) report; the terms Mosop and Soy are above all geographical descriptions. They describe where people live and not necessarily how they live. The Soy are those from (and of) the lower reaches of the mountain. It includes the Sabaot but-technically- not limited to them. Mosop refers to those from further up the mountain specifically from Chepkitale; the desolate moorlands that are found at about 3000 meters.

Arising out of institutionalization of colonialism in the process of state formation which relied heavily on the basis of ethnicity is the fact that the state begun as a weak state and has to a large extent remained a weak state. Although this generalization may not apply entirely to all countries as there are some where state-society relations are cordial and which are politically stable. Many countries remain under personal rule based on ethnic ties resulting in their legitimacy being challenged by some sections of the population. As such, many countries in Africa including Kenya do not seem to suit this definition and can therefore be described
as weak states where conflicts are attributed to the fact that political leadership have failed to assertively exert and extend their authority to the entire territory under their control and have also been unable to bring about and sustain ethnic unity or provide new incentives for different ethnic groups to live together.

Moreover, ethnic manipulation exacerbates old conflicts and creates new ones as rulers try to concentrate their efforts on suppressing dissent. Leadership becomes more vulnerable and because of this vulnerability, the focus shifts from people relations to maintaining power at all cost. Clapham (2002) aptly captures this situation of weak states when he uses the metaphor of a ship’s captain to describe this type of rulers by saying that they cannot spend time setting the course and navigating but rather only concentrate on staying afloat. Furthermore, colonialism effected ethnicization through stereotyping.

To this end, selfish political leaders have magnified the differences between the various communities and regions and stereotyped each community in a manner that would sow suspicion, hatred and the sense of “otherness”. Labels have been put on certain communities, portraying them in broad, often negative terms that generalise certain traits and apply them to all individuals belonging to the described community, regardless of how individuals perceive themselves. In this process, ethnic groups were compared with one another on the basis of capabilities and
disabilities as the determinant criteria for collective group worth. While group comparison is an aspect of life that can be used positively for emancipation and mobilization of people to enjoy public goods and services, it can also be used for dividing, disempowering and discriminating against them. It’s potential to create feelings of prejudice and resentment especially if its purpose is to extend favoritism and reward to groups considered loyal while neglecting others is very high.

In the Mt Elgon context, it was found out that the Sabaot have over the years consistently been viewed as a war-like community of cattle rustlers by their neighbours. Again, stereotype attributes such as industrious or lazy, warlike, backward, primitive, aggressive, gentle, intelligent or ignorant, receptive or antipathetic were assigned to different groups. To illustrate this, Non-Kalenjins living in these settlement schemes have over time been regarded as foreigners or bunot, meaning strangers and have never been accepted as residents. In addition to being referred to as bunot, non-Kalenjin communities settled in Rift Valley are generally referred to as madoadoa.

Worth emphasizing is that, although such stereotypes and prejudices are common among rival groups and helps in shedding light on some of the maze-like recurring intricacies of the protracted conflicts, they have not normally turned into conflict at the people-to-people level unless manipulated and organized by political leaders.
Elites find ethnic prejudices and stereotypes fertile ground in which they can easily cultivate support for their political and economic aspirations. Expressing their objectives in ethnic or nationality terms (such as “advancing the interest of our own people” or “protecting ourselves from another ethnic group”) enables the pursuits and gives them more legitimacy. As we have seen in many instances in the continent, the major beneficiaries of such aspirations turn out to be elites, but the whole ethnic group becomes associated with these aims since they are pursued in the name of the entire group.

Once this cycle starts and conflict begins to be waged in the group's name, fear and further animosity pervade the whole group, since all members become perceived as the enemy by those against whom the conflict is being waged. The pre-existing ethnic prejudices fuel the conflict because they simplify the complex motivations of the actors, making it easy to create an immediate “us” and “them” perception as well as to demonize the adversary. The boundaries “us” and “them” can be drawn around family, kinship, acquaintance, class, region, ethnic group, nation or even ‘race’. As has become apparent thus far, a conflict started by the elites ends up, in a self-fulfilling prophecy, engulfing the entire ethnic group.

The tendency to cleave and compare groups not only creates specific functions and roles for particular ethnic groups but also transforms and influences inter-group
relations in which the favoured in-groups and the discriminated out-groups became hostile to one another, which eventually leads to behavioural tendencies that often results in violent conflict. Most notably, Horowitz (2000) observes that ethnic conflicts “are essentially congeries of clans, living in closest proximity under identical conditions and yet displaying rudiments of separate people-hood and propensity to invidious comparison.”

In addition to the above, distribution of economic opportunities and public goods are also based on ethnic stereotypes and the consideration being whether a particular group is perceived submissive, loyal or disloyal. As a matter of fact, good schools, railway line, government offices, processing plants and commercial enterprises found within the area of the favoured in-groups. As further noted by Horowitz (2000), “the location of an ethnic group’s home territory often provided a head start” to conflict. Given the fact that regions have different economic endowment and are inhabited by different groups of people, the manner in which these material opportunities were distributed created distortions and also had location and ethnic meanings to particular groups to the extent that it inevitably created a sense of exclusive ownership that had to be guarded jealously. Such exclusive claims to territory inevitably create classes of “insiders” and “outsiders”. This perception of people as outsiders as opposed to fellow citizens often lead to increased tension based on ethnicity which, in turn, create the potential for ethnic
violence, in the sense that, whenever political misunderstandings emerge those who are identified as foreigners are always forced to go to their ancestral land.

This uneven distribution of opportunities results in groups being unequally advantaged a factor that largely explains inter-ethnic rivalry and hostility, often expressed through violent hostilities, as disadvantaged groups attempt to remove those in power. Jinadu (2004) goes a step further by pointing out that “asymmetrical ethno-racial stratified social structure of colonial state, left its unwholesome unhealed, simmering scars, recriminations, mutual antagonisms and fears, all of which served to undermine a sense of nationhood and common citizenship.”

Bruce (1998) notes, “through the application of such instruments of the state as consensus and maps, and even the establishment of colonial museums, all communities, persons, land and even physical artifacts were assigned a unique tribal identity and physical location”. For instance, the Mosop and the Soy clan names from the relative geographical elevations of the areas in which they settled (Medard, 2010; Lynch, 2011). These identities had a strong “socially reifying” effect on these groups and in many cases, they became official names and the group members started using them in their self-identification.
It was through this way that ethnic identities which bore little correspondence to their previous social composition and set up were formed and ruled through appointed tribal authorities. However, because this policy was practiced in a manner that different groups were treated differently-in-groups were favoured while out-groups were discriminated- created a long-lasting impact and colonial legacy of inter-ethnic rivalry which has continued to fuel conflicts long after countries in which it was practiced attained independence (Golooba, 2008).

In the study context and drawing from the TJRC Hansard (2013), Sabaot elders, however, tell a markedly different tale of increasing unhappiness at the apparent Bukusu dominance of the economic and, in particular, political life of Mount Elgon. It appears that majority of chiefs during the colonial period were either by accident or design drawn from the Bukusu and larger Luhya community to which they belonged. Their administration was far from popular with the Sabaot who complained bitterly about corruption as well as forced road building and forest clearing campaigns. The powerful chief Murunga was particularly hated. Chaffing under Luhya domination, Sabaot elders and politicians began to champion the administrative separation of Mount Elgon from Bungoma and its unification with “other Kalenjins” in Trans Nzoia. This was the recommendation made to the Regional Boundaries Commission (RBC) in 1962 (TJRC Hansard, 2013).
The origin of these rivalries can also be traced in group discrimination and the colonialist comparative process of evaluating the virtues and vices of ethnic Africans based on the premise that the ruled were unfit to manage their own affairs. In this case, even the most advanced ethnic groups among colonial people were denigrated which further led to fracturing of societies along ethnic lines. In tandem with legacy of discrimination and aggravating it was the manner in which colonial rule handled and nurtured ethnicity in Africa. Ethnicity was handled unevenly and inconsistently to the extent that often there was deliberate use of a group against the other which led to feelings of resentment, fears, mistrust, and hatred among the different ethnic groups making the potential for ethnic conflict high.

Ethnic tension, particularly the tendency to view people who are different as “the other” and thus not identify with, and either fear or scapegoat them, is unfortunately as old as human history. To understand the continued presence of ethnic tension today, and its evolution during the mandate period, the study traced the roots of ethnic tension to the colonial period, for it was under the colonial power that the political entity today known as Kenya was formed. It is an unfortunate fact that those who join political parties, and which politicians or parties form alliances, can be more often explained by ethnicity over any other factor. It is this potent, and at times volatile, combination of ethnicity and politics that has unfortunately spiraled into ethnic violence far too many times in our history. In the end, it must be
appreciated that tackling ethnic tension requires a multifaceted approach aimed at addressing the root causes, including long standing land grievances and economic and political marginalisation.

Unfortunately, independence brought little respite from the ravages of colonialism, instead, the role of ethnicity and ethnicization of politics has manifested itself in a number of ways. Successive governments since independence have failed to recognize the importance of ethnic diversity as an important factor in the process of nation building. Instead, they have abused and exploited this diversity, turning it from strength into a source of diversion and violence. The result is that the entire country has turned to war with itself through protracted conflicts that retard the country’s economic and political development and jeopardize its unity.

Further explained, Kenya, just like other African countries, entered the era of independence with a heightened sense of ethnicity that continued to divide rather than unite the country. First, political power control, access to and distribution of economic resources, remained in the hands of strong men whose rule was characterized by informal patriarch networks based on ethnic and regional lines. In this regard, transition to independence under Kenyatta regime introduced a clear bias in allocation of farmland in favor of the core constituencies of the ruling party.
Those who claimed these same lands as their ancestral birthright were at on losing end during Kenyatta-era land allocations. What they saw as their birthright was transferred by government to settlers and immigrants from other parts of Kenya, regime dignitaries and key allies of ruling elite. Supporting this view is Miguel (2004); “the first two post-independence presidents, Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi, are perceived as “tribalists,” political opportunists who thrived on politics of ethnic division”. Thus, “ethnicity has become primary cleavage of political life in Kenya, as in many other African countries” (Miguel, 2004).

Whereas the post-independent rulers inherited artificial states which were created by European colonial powers at the Berlin Conference, their bureaucratic authoritarianism, instrumentalized disorder, patronage and greed for power has had adverse effects on state building of inter-ethnic relations, national integration, social economic development and stability. In actual fact ethnicity has gained momentum largely due to its manipulation and politicization by rulers in the struggle to maintain hegemonic control of state power and resources. As such, the politicisation of ethnic differences during the process of modern Sabaot community can be illustrated by Sabaot community allegations of being marginalized in terms of national Kenyan politics surfaces.
This implies that the region has neither produced a politician of national standing, nor has it attracted consistent attention of one. This point is important if one considers patterns of national resource distribution in terms of patronage networks that have defined the Kenyan polity since independence. Unlike the Bukusu who had strong national leadership with people like the late Masinde Muliro who could negotiate on their behalf, the Sabaot lacked such calibre of leadership. Therefore, the Bukusu got a bigger share of land allocation than the Sabaot despite Sabaot’s claim on Trans-Nzoia as their ancestral land (Simiyu, 2008).

This in turn has shaped the scope of ethnic politics, and the particular character of state society relations to the extent that rulers have tended to ignore national integration of the diverse ethnic groups but have instead undermined it by arbitrary authoritarian use of state power to enrich themselves, allocate jobs to ethnic tribesmen, thus breaching the social contract of public trust. As aptly noted by Bruce, “the politics of political tribalism and moral ethnicity became linked to the ability of the ‘big men’ of ethnic communities holding positions in the state to obtain for the districts and regions a significant share of the large-scale collective benefits, as well as more individual rewards apportioned through the discrete personal contracts of the back verandah” (Bruce, 1998).
It is not surprising that the independence period actually witnessed the initial major instances of inter-ethnic violence pitting the Sabaot and Bukusu and continued unabated till 1974, during which, most of the Bukusu were displaced and their land taken by the Sabaots. This coincided with the heated political atmosphere occasioned by competition between the two main parties – KANU and KADU – and their ethnically defined constituents. The 1963 Bukusu-Sabaot conflict had political and economic overtones and resulted in the evacuation of the Bukusu then considered aliens for not supporting Daniel Moss of Kenya African National Union (KANU), the choice of the Sabaot in that year’s General Election. The 1968 conflict had to do with cattle rustling insinuations against the Sabaot while Daniel Moss was accused of having incited the Sabaot in 1975 (Kakai, 2000).

The Bukusu- Sabaot ethnic conflict which broke out again in the early 1990s coincided with the advent of multiparty politics, marked by increased political activity as a result of agitation for political pluralism (NCCK, 1994). Oyugi (1998) argues that the 1991/92 ethnic violence was due to manipulation by fractions of the Kenyan leadership as they mobilized support for the competition of power and wealth. Consistent with this view is Mueller’s argument that political entrepreneurs take advantage of the opportunity provided by the weakening of state authority that is occasioned by political transition (Mueller, 2001). Klopp (2001) argues that some Kenyan politicians used the ethnic clashes that took place in the 1990s to expel
potential opponents and secure their electoral areas, effectively “gerrymandering by moving people” (M´edard, 1996, Kagwanja, 1998).

The Kiliku (1992) report which probed the genesis and causes of ethnic and territorial conflicts among the Bukusu and the Sabaot noted that these conflicts were politically motivated. The report of the Parliamentary Select Committee under Kiliku’s chairmanship emphasized the issues of power, and resources. The report points out that the government appears to have been reduced to a contributor, rather than, the manager of the conflicts due to its acts of omission or commission. It emerged that the government wanted to gain political mileage out of the clashes by using violence as a political tool. Thus, ethnic polarization and violence were used to destabilize areas from which the opposition parties were expected to garner massive support during the 1992 general elections.

To add more emphasis, as noted from the TJRC report, (2013); Mount Elgon’s politics conform to Kenyan politics in that, they are broadly ethnic. Politicians and their parties mobilize primarily along ethnic lines. What this meant was that for many years, Mount Elgon constituency has been represented by a member of parliament from the majority Sabaot community. In turn, Mount Elgon representatives have without exception aligned themselves with the larger Kalenjin bloc and whatever political party housed them. As shown above, Daniel Moss of
KANU was the first politician to represent them in Independent Kenya. He was a trenchant supporter of Sabaot land rights and a prime mover behind the establishment of Chebyuk in the mid-1960s.

There is a common use of analogies and metaphors referring to politics as ‘eating’, feasting’ or ‘devouring’, literally meaning that once an individual gets into power, then the whole ethnic group from where he comes are automatically entitled to access the jobs, material benefits and all the opportunities and privileges that comes with the position. Through this way, both the political elite and members of his ethnic group seek to assure themselves of continued hold and perpetuating the dominance of power at whatever cost even in the face of overt resentment and disapproval by other groups. In this regard, the clearing and settlement of the Chebyuk area cannot be dissociated from the political history of the Elgon parliamentary constituency which was created in 1963 in favour of the local MP Daniel Moss, one of the rare Kalenjins who supported Kenyatta’s Kenya African National Union (KANU) from inception.

At clan level, the Mosop still felt that a lot of the problems they experienced in the settlement of Chebyuk since 1971 to 2006 and after can be linked to the unfair treatment of the Mosop by members of the Soy politicians; who had dominated political positions of the area since independence. Citing the position of Member

As a result of political domination, leaders were accused of having marginalized and influenced distributed resources in favour of Soy clan. But why should elites give members of their own group preferential treatment rather than spread their favours over various groups? On one hand, members of one’s own ethnic group are most likely to be given preference in terms of trust (Cohen, 1974). This is because according to their own self-understanding, ethnic groups wish to represent a kind of extended kinship group whose members are obligated to mutual aid.

Mount Elgon, however, did not exist in a vacuum. It lay against broader tableau of national politics. There was no more important issue in 2005 than the referendum on the adoption of a new constitution, while in 2007 was the general election. Aspirants to political office harped on the high value attached to land to woo a support base, often deliberately or unwittingly inciting communities against each other over land ownership. More specifically, the political antagonism between Kapondi and Serut created sectarian politics and factions within the Soy clan.
Each clan accused the other of including their political allies in the land allocation process at the expense of the opposing political side. Each faction viewed the other as the hindrance to realisation of their land rights especially in Chepyuk Phase III. For instance, Serut was accused by the Soy group of including the Ndorobo in Chepyuk Phase III so as to gain political support whereas according to Soy they did not deserve it. This therefore explains the target and attacks by SLDF (which mainly composed of Soy youth) on Soy members who were sympathetic to the plight of Ndorobo and also supporters of Serut. The 2006-2008 conflict certainly has added more to a deeply essential, conflictual, painfully lived form of ethnicity.

In sum, then, does ethnic identity and stereotyping lead to protracted conflicts? As has become apparent thus far, ethnic tension, particularly the tendency to view people who are different as ‘the other’ thus not identifying with does not per se lead to conflict but is a major theme around which mobilization for political support and access to public resources has been conducted. Consequently, any discussion of ethnic identity and stereotyping in present-day protracted conflicts would be incomplete without a discussion of the relationship between ethnicity and politics.

The issue here is not how political leaders have continued to practice the colonial legacy of divide and rule, ethnic politicization and fractionalization which has eroded the crystallization of national ethnic integration, but rather why they have
decided to use the ethnic card that has brought about enormous human suffering and misery. In so doing, the study traced the roots of ethnic tension to the colonial period, for it was under the colonial power that the political entities today known as states were formed. It is this potent, and at times volatile, combination of ethnicity and politics that has unfortunately spiraled into violence far too many times, making the situation protracted.

4.3 Natural Resources and the Protracted Conflict

Before delving into the analysis, it is of interest to point out that the past scholarship has engaged in a long and polarized debate about the social effects of natural resources. Protagonists of the resource-based conflict school such as Homer-Dixon (1994; 1998), Karl (1997), and Collier and Hoefller (2000). Homer-Dixon (1994; 1998), in a Neo-Malthusian structural ecologist explanation argues that global environmental changes leads to scarcities of resources that could lead to societal collapse. Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti illustrate these arguments.

Others have suggested that natural resource abundance, rather than scarcity, fuels conflict and socio-economic stagnation as demonstrated in countries such as the DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Angola, and Algeria. Consistent with this trend, certain mainstream oral narratives seek to justify and sustain the argument that the protracted Mt Elgon conflicts tend to revolve around the struggle for land or as Throup and Hornsby (1998) put it, “land ownership remained at the core of the
argument.” For many, land is at the heart of the protracted conflicts and has brought out some of the extremes in the area’s security complexities. But such assertion raises pertinent questions: If land is the cause of conflict, why is the intensity of grievances and scale of the violence becoming more vicious and devastating?

In this respect, the first key aspect is that the protracted conflict arising from simple Malthusian perspective of land scarcity (a factor of overall land availability, the ‘physical distribution’ of land, and population growth) (Malthus, 1978). Looking at the study findings, it is strongly indicated that Mt Elgon’s scarcity of land resources, coupled with high population for a rural area, constitutes the root cause of the protracted conflict, which indeed, seems as convincing as ever in the context of the Mt Elgon conflict. This is based on two incidents: first, in phase 1 when land was still plentiful, the relationship between Soy and Ndorobo was cordial. When the Mosop were first relocated from Chepkitale to Chepyuk, no conflicts were reported between them and the Soys. In fact, as shown in chapter 2, after the establishment of the Chepyuk settlement scheme and the Mosop’s relocation there, it is the Mosop who invited their Soy counterparts (about 300 families) to the area so that they could together claim the whole territory. Apparently, the elders of the two communities even agreed on the boundary between them. Second, relations between Sabaot and non-Sabaot were not only cordial when Sabaot thought there was sufficient land in the initial stages of settlement but many Sabaot families
invited non-Sabaot to assist in clearing the forest for settlement, for which many received a share of the cleared land (Simiyu, 2008).

Mt Elgon is highly considered as a perfect example of this hard-Malthusian argument. In adhering to this narrative, 2006-2008 conflict was the unavoidable outcome of overpopulation and environmental stress, which heightened tensions and stakes in conflicts over land allocation (Kahl, 2006). This is further exemplified in the UNDP/OCHA (2010) report, which notes “those who were children in initial allocations and thus didn’t qualify would be adults by the time the government is concluding the process.” This therefore resulted in “surge of the number of applicants despite the fact that land for distribution was not expanding”. Writing in the context of the Rwandan genocide, King (1994), notes that refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) can be qualified as “environmental refugees.” and the whole conflict characterized as due to “demographic entrapment.”

While the land scarcity hypotheses point to critical components of the population-environment-civil strife connection, they provide an incomplete understanding of the causal relationship. The causal connection between population growth, environmental pressure, and civil strife is rarely direct and obvious. Infact, it is important to point out that there exist large tracts of prime land in the protracted Mt Elgon area owned by individuals and corporations such as the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC). On this account, rational land predators would be expected to have targeted these farms. Surprisingly, the raiders targeted none of
them. Instead violence occurred in settlement schemes with small-scale farms but large populations, suggesting an objective of displacing large numbers of people.

For the above reasons, there does not appear to be a convincing case that such simple Malthusian perspective on land scarcity can be the cause of the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon. Hence, it is important to emphasize that the mere fact of increasing population densities does not explain why the violence was so brutal and remains protracted. In addition, attributing the protracted conflict to domestic causes such as population pressure suggests that in organizing and carrying out the conflict, people were merely responding almost mechanistically to domestic pressures. This counter argument becomes even stronger, from the perspective that the Malthus thinking does not take into account the ability of societies to adapt to increased capacity and avoid crisis, through cultural or technological advances.

Again, whether land inequality constitutes a driving force of conflicts or not is quite debatable. Land inequality and hardship are common to many parts of the world, and most do not experience the horrors of protracted conflicts. While it would be far too simple to state that “land causes conflict” (say, where it is unevenly shared), simply dismissing its role because it is unclear would be equally misleading, but again, it must be emphasized that; it becomes scholarly blind to reduce such protracted conflicts merely to a commonly token rivalry over scarce resources.
Less doctrinaire about the unavoidability of violence is a “softer” Malthusian argument, that although conditions of severe ecological resource scarcity generate severe social tension, other variables, such as nature of state, existence of conflict-resolution mechanisms, and broader economic and social dynamics, determine final outcomes. Most scholars such as (Simiyu, 2008; Medard, 2008) align themselves with this position. But tend to do so implicitly, without actually analyzing the matter, as if by default it is too evident to be discussed or too unassailable to be reflected upon. In its soft form, this explanation is often mentioned in a phrase or two by authors who largely subscribe to “elite manipulation.”

In other words, the authors subscribe implicitly to the “soft” Malthusian school, but they seem to do so not as the result of explicit analysis, but as some kind of automatic reflex or something to which they feel they ought to pay lip service. So, while ecological resource scarcity did play a role in the processes that led to the 2006-2008 violence, this was not fixed and cannot be understood without considering political processes. For this reason, it must be stressed at this stage that conflicts over access to land in Kenya are intertwined with disputes over how state power has been used to gain political advantage (Boone, 2012). Opportunistic politicians manipulate local issues and foment violence for electoral gain, but the tensions they manipulated were, to a large extent, land-related and long-standing. These tensions, their origins and persistence, and how they cleaved rural society in Mt Elgon are the focus of the subsequent analysis.
At the grassroots level, rival groups have often stood on opposite sides of a distributive conflict that has been structured and stoked by land allocation policies of Kenya’s governments, both colonial and postcolonial. All of Kenya’s governments have used their discretionary powers over land allocation in Mt Elgon as an instrument of distributive politics, granting access strategically to engineer political constituencies that would bolster them against their rivals. In this regard, the 1950s agrarian radicalism fused with anti-colonialism propelled Kenya’s nationalist struggle (Kanongo, 1987; Furedi, 1989) to become an independent nation state in 1963, land had acquired a key position in life of the new nation.

The systematic application of the colonial political and socio-economic systems had left indelible marks on the young state. The transition to independence under the Kenyatta regime introduced a skewed land redistribution policy, in favor of the core constituencies of the ruling party through the state-financed and state-run programs, parcelled up to create settlement schemes (Leys, 1975; Oyugi, 2000; Boone, 2011b). Those who claimed these same lands as their ancestral birthright were at the losing end of Kenyatta-era land allocations. What they saw as their birthright was transferred by the government to settlers and immigrants from other parts of Kenya, regime dignitaries, and key allies of the ruling elite and not the landless masses, couched in the modernist argument of willing buyer and willing seller but in many cases, willingness was state enforced.
In particular, the politically demand induced scarcity could best be illustrated in terms of the government’s role as the “monopoliser” and “allocator” as well as ‘gatekeeper’ of access to the state-run settlement schemes (Harbeson, 1973). State officials were in direct control of the allocation of plots to individual households, who were selected on a case-by-case basis by the official settlement authority (Klopp, 2000; Boone, 2012). For instance, in the Mt Elgon case; the establishment of the game reserve at Chepkitale in 1968 took up a substantial part of Chepkitale trust land, reducing the available grazing area of the Mosop and restricting their access to forest resources that formed an important component of their livelihood. This action by the government sparked protests and agitation by the Mosop, which were contained and suppressed by the provincial administration and security forces (Throup, 1998). This eventually culminated in their down-slope relocation that in due course resulted in tensions between them and the Soy thus souring the cordial relations between the two groups. In terms of the land size, the study also noted that the government moved the Mosop from 35 000-hectare land in Chepkitale to a 6 500-hectare scheme (Simiyu, 2008).

Not surprisingly, the clearing and settlement of the Chebyuk area cannot be dissociated from the political history of the Elgon parliamentary constituency, which was created in 1963 in favour of the local MP Daniel Moss. The removal of the Ogiek community from their land to make room for the Mt Elgon national park to generate foreign exchange for the country is a good example of an action that led
to indirect discrimination. Regardless of the intent of the state, it is clear that the
effect of their removal with no or minimal compensation impoverished the
community. Having been removed from their lands and the source of their
livelihoods, members of the community live in extreme poverty. As such, the
widespread disinheritance of land rights of the rural poor coupled with resource
capture by elite groups has been closely related to deepening rural poverty in the
area. Deepening rural poverty, in turn breeds high levels of resentment and
insecurity, which constitute a threat for peace in the short and long run.

Harbeson (1973) explains that “actual titles (were) held by the Central Land Board
and were to become the possession of the settlers only when they met their financial
and developmental obligations to pay for their plots. This was financed on a thirty-
year government loan at a 6 percent rate of interest and farmed according to
conditions laid out in a Letter of Allotment. This gave many poor Mosop families
few options for creating viable livelihoods in agriculture for their children. Infact,
Sessional Paper No. 10 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in
Kenya, the pre-eminent policy statement by the post-independence government
dismissed the livestock-based pastoralist economy and in the process contributed
to unequal development patterns and the marginalization of non-crop-farming
communities. Drought, sedentarization, and moves into agriculture on the part of
once largely pastoral people increased demands for farmland.
As further illustrated by Simiyu, (2008) the supply-induced land scarcity as a source of conflict can also be seen to stem from the government’s decision to exclude non-Sabaot from the re-settlement programme and on occasion evicting those who had bought land. This had at least two effects, first, it left many families landless and destitute and reinforced the feeling among the Sabaot that Mount Elgon belonged exclusively to them. Second, and related to the first point, it increased Sabaot determination to root out non-Sabaot from their midst. On the other hand, demand-induced land scarcity arose from both the demographic and environmental stress, which heightened the tensions and stakes in conflicts over land allocation (Kahl, 2006). The rich agricultural soils of Mount Elgon District obviously attracted farming populations from especially the larger Bungoma District. The process was also helped by the need, on the part of the Sabaot, for labour in clearing forestland for settlement. A related dynamic that presented serious challenges to the process of land allocation involved the multiplication of family members among intended beneficiaries, as children of the families that were initially supposed to benefit from land allocations also started families of their own. The challenge stemmed from the fact that land was allocated per family, but the state always procrastinated in finalizing land allocation programmes. As a direct result of this demographic process, vetting committees in all three phases of the resettlement programme were invariably overwhelmed with applications. Many people, including genuine claimants, lost out in the process.
In 1978, Moi inherited the presidency. From the mid-1980s onward his regime became progressively more active in using land allocation and the land-restitution issue as tools to forge a cohesive ethnopolitical constituency out of the Kalenjin groups and the other ethnocultural groups claiming to be native or indigenous to the Rift Valley—the Kalenjin groups (Southall, 2005; Lynch, 2008). Allegations of corruption, political interference and nepotism have marred all phases of the resettlement programme. Throup and Hornsby (1989, pg. 198–89) write that leading members of the “Kalenjin ruling elite” were notorious land-grabbers. Some people benefited from land allocations at the expense of others, while some legitimate claimants evicted, adding to the resentment and tensions. The Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal/Irregular Allocation of Public Land (the Ndung’u Commission) noted that throughout the 1980s and 1990s public land was illegally and irregularly allocated “in total disregard of the public interest and in circumstances that fly in the face of the law,” (Ndungu, 2004).

This became the foundation of ethnic tensions, and later violence, particularly in the Rift Valley and Coast Provinces (TJRC, 2013). This is because the local politicians exploited the land issue for political gain as either defenders of their people’s land rights or as dispensers of the scarce resource. Kanyinga (2000) observes that violence resulted from the elite’s appropriation of the land issue to fight those opposed to them by reactivating demands for territorial land claims in the Rift Valley and at the Coast.
Notable is the fact that most ethnic clashes occurred around the first, second and fourth multiparty elections in 1992, 1997 and 2007. As pointed out by Boone (2012), the introduction of multipartism in 1991–92 created new incentives for Moi regime politicians: it heightened their incentives to mobilize potential and likely supporters and to get these people out to vote, and also to reduce the vote share of the opposition by discouraging or preventing likely opposition-party voters from going to the polls. This confluence of factors brought questions of land distribution and redistribution to a crisis point (Mutua 2008).

Indeed, the “ethnic cleansing” in the Rift Valley [was] often little more than an informal state-approved land redistribution (Gibbon, 1995). Leading members of the Moi government campaigned openly on a platform of chasing settlers out of the Rift and reallocating land to the regime’s own supporters. The Sabaot were encouraged by ruling-party politicians to demand that “settlers” be dispossessed of their land and expelled. Politicians dangled the tantalizing prize of restoring land in the Rift Valley to the “original owners,” leading to the early 1990s clashes between the Sabaot and the Bukusu.

Most of the existing reports have confirmed the complicity of the KANU government in fanning clashes as described in detail by the Kiliku Report (of the 1992 Select Parliamentary Committee), the Akiwumi Report (of the 1999 Judicial Commission), 1993 reports of Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the 1994 Kenya National Council of Churches report. At the Centre of these clashes, were two
explosive issues – the control of land and economic power. This is because Moi had not addressed the inequalities of land redistribution, ownership and use that were a hangover from Kenyatta’s presidency.

The process of land allocation itself, the procrastination surrounding it as well as the fact that it has for most part not been conducted in a fair and transparent manner have all contributed to the conflict. The government took too long to allocate land after apportioning parcels along community lines and deciding on the number of beneficiaries and size of allocations per family. Without a transparent vetting process and mechanisms for preventing illegal use of land and punishing the perpetrators, and in the absence of a system of verifying the status of land earmarked for resettlement – whether the land was vacant or occupied – the government procrastination created room for people to move on to the land, allocate plots to themselves and even trade in them. As was mentioned above, because of the time lapse between establishment of settlement schemes and official allocation of land, increases in family size occurred, creating demand-induced scarcities.

These processes had various consequences that replicated in all the three phases of land allocation. To begin with, by the time the government started the process of allocating land, eligible families always were more than those that had initially been considered. Second, land allocation meant that some families, including those (from Soy and Mosop clans as well as migrants who were not supposed to benefit but had either allocated themselves land or purchased or leased land from earlier
settlers, were evicted. This rendered many landless and homeless increasing the number of those impoverished. The result was feelings of bitterness and injustice, and accusations of favoritism which intensified intra- and inter-community tensions between evictees and latter allocatees. Third, illegal self-allocation of land by the landless whenever they were evicted became routine, further not only complicating the subsequent land allocation process but also underscored and heightened political contingency of the prevailing distribution of land in the area.

Land politics remained at the center stage in the Kibaki regime from 2002 to 2007, and from 2008. The land question was central in the tumultuous drama unfolding over the vote on Kenya’s new constitution in August 2010 (Boone, 2012). In terms of the case study, land in Mt Elgon was politicized in the violent conflict and used as a tool for demagogic mobilization. During the 2006-2008 violent conflict, the political elite tried to incite ordinary peasants by insisting that lands held by “outsiders,” would be redistributed once they had been displaced. This became one of the rationales to justify the violence and killings.

In a nutshell, throughout Mt Elgon’s history, land allocation politics and the inequality debates resulting from it, affected by layers of claims and counterclaims, with the underlying political patronage and corruption and favouritism by government officials. This demonstrates the internal contradiction of the African state: which, as a result of rivalries and competition among the social forces which define it – in this case competition among elite from the same region for patronage
resources – becomes a source of conflict, adding to the challenges to resolve it (Obi, 1999). Opportunistic politicians manipulated local issues and fomented violence for electoral gain, but the tensions they manipulated were, to a large extent, land-related and long-standing. On the whole, it may safely be said that once land has become a key political issue at the outbreak of conflict, failure to tackle it straight away can impede the chances of achieving lasting peace.

4.4 Structural factors and the Protracted Mt Elgon Conflict

Structural factors have been cited as one of the most important explanatory factors behind the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon. Available literature shows that a sense of injustice, arising out of underlying divisions of power and prosperity in a society, provides the basic material for political mobilisation or a justified claim for political mobilisation (Smith, 2004). The combination of poor economic conditions and lack of political avenues to address these operate as a double injustice. It follows that political mobilisation then occurs around the theme of injustice.

In the light of this study and in relation to the social political and economic exclusion of the Mt Elgon people, built on British colonial structures, it seems likely that the prevalence of organised criminal groups, ranging from vigilante groups such as Progressive Defense Forces, Moorland Defense Force, the Political Revenge Movement, to organised militias like SLDF can be understood as airing or advancing the Mt Elgon grievances. Similarly, and partly because of the above
observation, Simiyu (2008) notes that the grievances underpinning the protracted Mt Elgon conflict is the culmination of a long history of the Sabaot community’s struggle against historical injustice in the form of colonial disinheriance of their ancestral land without compensation by either the colonial government or successive post-colonial governments.

Other structural factors range from lack of opportunity and economic development such as basic social services, in the embattled Mt Elgon during the colonial and post-colonial periods, appear to have deepened pre-existing rifts among communities to internal factors, such as the increase of grinding poverty and hopelessness, poor life expectancy and high levels of mortality rate for all age groups, as well as crippling disorder and human rights disasters. There also exists the issues of small arms proliferation, banditry, the rise of social exclusion and marginality particularly felt in remote areas, elite corruption and the militarization of societies. Infact, almost all of known conditions that render an area susceptible to renewed or persistent armed conflict are present and, in some instances, deeply rooted; which are all emerging as real “strategic” dangers; extremely difficult problems to reverse, especially because they tend to be self-reinforcing.

It is worth noting that whereas the root cause of this can be traced to the colonial period whereby the policy of “compartmentalization” of the protectorate meant that different areas were designated for specific purposes, the post independent Kenyan
rulers never cared to address this imbalance. If anything, they nurtured it and in fact exacerbated it. Basic colonial infrastructure for example roads, schools, and hospitals were concentrated in the neighbouring Trans- Nzoia and Bungoma, a phenomenon that has not changed much, resulting in frustration, anger and jealousy and therefore fueling conflict.

To this end, the contention is that low levels of economic development are key factors that lead to conflict (Hauge & Ellingsen, 1998). This assertion is supported by Atwood (2005) when he aptly notes that, “there is a strong correlation between the absence of material well-being and the prospects for violence, from crime in inner-city neighborhoods to political instability and social conflict in poor nations.” Similarly, Staub (2003) notes that “basic needs have an impressive quality: they press for satisfaction. If they cannot be fulfilled by constructive means, people will attempt to fulfill them by destructive means; that is, in ways that harm themselves and/or other people”.

The persuasiveness of the above arguments notwithstanding, several issues remains unexplained or ambiguous. The question is: how the structural grievances or this sense of desperation did translate into violence primarily against specific ethnic targets? Do economic deprivation and grievances provide a strong explanatory factor for the protracted conflict? These and perhaps other questions are likely to
continue posing a great challenge to anyone wishing to study and understand how structural factors have contributed to the protracted nature of the Mt Elgon conflict. Across the scholarly literature, Collier and Hoeffler (1999) have a different view. They argue that the predominance of self-interest among individual leaders is a highly predictable cause of intra-state conflicts compared to structural grievances or feelings of deprivation. This is based on the fact that it is political leaders who, as policy makers make decisions that affect the people being ruled. In poor societies, leaders usually compete with one another for control over available economic resources (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998, 1999). On the basis of statistical demonstration, Collier and Hoeffler (2004: 564; 2001) dismiss the link between inequality and violent rebellion as remote and conclude that rebellions are motivated by greed. Greed means that the presence of valuable resources such as diamonds, gold, or drugs constitute a necessary condition for occurrence of civil war (Collier & Hoeffler, 2001).

Armed groups, according to this position, become involved in violent conflict with one another in order to take charge of resources. Various rebel activities are used as parts of the wider scheme of exploitation. Widespread crimes against civilians would be instrumental in confiscating ownership of resource-rich lands. Child-soldiering or forced conscription would be instrumental in the process of exploitation. Sustained disruption of peace and stability would provide an occasion
for exploitation since the re-establishment of legitimate state authority would end their profitable control over resource-rich areas (Collier & Hoeffler, 2001).

In this respect, rebellion is an enterprise that generates profitable revenue from looting. Rebellions are therefore explained in terms of the circumstances that produce profitable prospects. This is because, according to Collier and Hoeffler, opportunities associated with conflict and motivated by greed are likely to motivate stakeholders to engage in conflicts. Collier (2000) goes further to argue that, even though rebels develop programmes of action based on what is perceived as genuine grievance, this is only meant to build an outsider acceptable image since they would not wish to be considered as criminals, which is an untrustworthy picture of the rebels whose real motives are likely to be greed. Let us apply the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon to assess Collier and Hoeffler position.

The point here is that if the prevalence and insurgency of organised criminal groups, ranging from vigilante groups such as Progressive Defense Forces, Moorland Defense Force, the Political Revenge Movement, to organised militias like SLDF were to be placed within this explanatory paradigm, then the reasoning would be that the parties to the conflict were motivated by greed rather than by economic grievances. This could be corroborated by a number of factors. SLDF and other militia’s strategy appeared at odds to claim that they represent Sabaot grievances.
The grievances included the long history of the Sabaot community’s struggle against historical injustice in the form of colonial disinheri tance of their ancestral land. This is because they were not compensated either by the colonial government or successive post-colonial governments caused in part by inequitable distribution and access patterns (Simiyu, 2008).

The insurgency’s mode of operation, in which the atrocious actions were directed against the very people whose interest they claimed to represent, made the conflict appear as a struggle between the predominantly militia and the local population, who were the main victims. In particular, atrocities such as the brutal murder, mutilation and summary execution of non-combatants, extortion, torching of homesteads, abduction of young boys and girls to be used as killing machines, ‘human mules’ for transportation of goods, sex slaves and concubines respectively have been extensively documented by human rights organizations (HRW, 2008); with burgeoning exodus of refugees to neighbouring Uganda and yet others forcefully displaced from their villages to become IDPs, displayed the extent to which the SLDF insurgency operated without ethics or concern for the welfare of their own people. In this respect, one could argue that the driving force behind the insurgency was merely predatory in exploiting the vulnerable women, children and the wider society. Moreover, much as the aggrieved Mt Elgon people could have resorted to the use of non-violent means to express their discontent, the government
also could have avoided the conflict by handling the sensitivities of the situation through designing policies that could peacefully address the underlying causes.

The fact that this did not happen shows that the main reason for the longevity of the conflict would be that it served the economic interests not only of the militia gangs such as SLDF, who pursued, not political goals, but were primarily motivated by self-interest as an income enterprise. This observation tends to make sense especially if we consider that the SLDF’s primary source of supplies came from the looting of villages. A number of respondents interviewed confirmed that there were shops and stores where looted valuables were sold. It is thus incorrect to perceive all actions of SLDF as representing grievances and aspirations of the entire community. Experts argue that, by prolonging the conflict, the militia members were able to earn a better living for themselves and for their families than they would have been able to earn if they returned to civilian life. For the Government, the insurgency was instrumental in raising revenue.

The militia activities may make them appear to be greedy, extortionist and predatory, but, given the structural realities preceding the war, we cannot say that the SLDF insurgency is predominantly motivated by greed and not grievance. Thus, the statistical explanatory model of grievance developed by Collier and Hoeffler cannot stand as the sole explanation for the emergence and longevity of the conflict.
in Mt Elgon. The model is reductionist and does not explore many explanatory factors related to conflicts. According to Nathan (2005), statistical analysis of measurable variables used by Collier and Hoeffler may not accurately explain the reasons behind rebel behaviour and motive. This is because such a model fails to consider many indeterminate factors such as structural conditions, causality dynamics, catalytic events, and reasons for decision of various actors and soldiers, which cannot be easily determined through statistical analysis (Nathan, 2005).

That is not all, preferring greed to grievance as a better explanatory variable presupposes that one can be certain that a given conflict necessarily results from greed. Yet, as Doom and Vlassenroot (1999) cogently observe, the boundaries between political and criminal violence, between social banditry and looting, between gangs and rebels are blurred in certain contexts. They point out moreover that a mixture of motives may be at work and that dynamics of a conflict may change while it is in progress. In this respect, the model developed by Collier and Hoeffler cannot adequately explain the nature and longevity of conflict in Mt Elgon and the foregoing invalidates the model as the sole explanation of insurgencies.

Probably the most convincing narrative would be that the militia incursions were not a sudden or inexplicable disaster, but the outcome of a long political process in Kenya through which both the struggle for power and the use of violence became
part of the country’s political culture (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). Prevailing social and political circumstances in a given country play an import role in the emergence of conflicts. Overt, wide-scale violence and unpredictable behaviors by rebel groups do not happen in stable societies. They result from insidious processes, which produce incidental chaos (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). In this perspective, the kind of terror inflicted upon society has structural roots.

Accordingly, in trying to understand the dynamics and fundamental causes of the kind of terror that was used in the northern Ugandan conflict and the motivation of the SLDF, one cannot point to a single root cause. Attempting to do this mis specifies the struggles; it oversimplifies the complex mutual interaction of factors – the constitutive nature of historical factors such as the effects of colonial imposition that left a legacy of economic marginalisation and inequality enshrined in the north-south divide. The exclusion was deepened with the political and economic marginalisation of the Sabaot under successive independence regimes.

In this respect, the manifestation of greedy, predatory and extortive motives among militia gangs at a subjective level would not entail the absence of objective demands on the part of the Mt Elgon population. In other words, if the militia top most generals had changed their strategies so that no one gave orders for abduction, would the Mt Elgon people have supported the Militia’s struggles and how could
one be sure that the conflict would not assume a different dimension altogether? The point is that the Mt Elgon’s grievances were based on their conditions of exclusion in relation to the state and not on SLDF. SLDF wanted to reclaim their land in order to address that exclusion, but their strategy alienates rather than mobilises the support base. On these grounds, it would be more reasonable to choose both greed and grievance as explanatory variables.

Greed and grievance may therefore be complementary and show mutually reinforcing elements of ethno-political mobilisation (Smith, 2004). The argument should be formulated less in terms of grievance or greed, but in terms of how these are mutually reinforced in particular situations. In this respect, we can appreciate the role played by systematic political and economic differentials in relation to the conflict without ignoring the militia mode of operation. This allows us to distinguish subjective demand on the part of militia from objective circumstances (Mt Elgon’s grievances).
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Study Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to dissect and understand the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it. A Multicausal analysis of protracted conflicts provided a basis for a more comprehensive approach to conflict management and conflict transformation. The objective was to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of what has fueled and sustained this particular conflict, which has proven so difficult to bring to an end. The choice of the study setting is motivated by the fact that the area is prone to political instability and violence resulting from complex and rapidly changing social economic dynamics, of which there is paucity of literature on the protracted nature of the conflict and the motivations driving it. So, by exploring the factors behind its seeming intractability such as ethnic identity and stereotyping; struggle for natural resources especially land; and structural factors such as poverty, youth militarization, proliferation of SALW, banditry and the culture of violence, this study yields some valuable lessons for students of peace and conflict studies. This study aimed to make a contribution to the literature by conducting a systematic assessment, of why this particular conflict has remained so protracted.
Edward Azar’s theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) and conflict trap theory by Paul Collier, V.L. Elliott, Harvard Hegre, Ankle Hoeffler, Marta Reynal-Querol and Nicholas Sambanis were important and highly relevant theories employed in the study with the aim of understanding the protracted nature of the conflict in Mt Elgon and the motivations driving it through use of a multi-disciplinary approach. The theories were carefully selected to explain and enhance the understanding of each of the variables affecting the research question. While the study first and foremost set out to identify factors which contribute to the intractability of conflict in Mt Elgon, a thorough conceptualization of relevant theory and a historical overview of the case study were provided as a point of departure. An analysis then followed which tied theory to field findings. Below is a range of recommendations, a concluding discussion as well as possible avenues for further research.

5.2 Study Recommendations

First, it is important to start by pointing out that already various community stakeholders led by the government have been committed to assist Mt Elgon people achieve sustainable peace. However, achievement of this goal will depend on the development and implementation of strategies meant to address the complex underlying factors responsible for exacerbating the protracted conflicts in the area. It will also rely on programs that assist both victims and perpetrators to deal with the memories and the longer-term impacts of violence that has been witnessed in the area. The remainder of this section considers a
range of strategies that, if implemented, should reduce the opportunities for protracted conflicts to play a destabilizing role in Mt Elgon society in future.

a) **Full implementation of the devolution agenda**: There is need for greater autonomy in the management of devolved units and a more equal partnership with the national government in formulating strategies for the development of natural resources and distribution of national wealth is considered by many to be a vital means of avoiding ethnic and parochial tensions in future. Robust commitment is therefore required to ensure that the devolution agenda is not only seen to respond to grass root concerns but is also as efficient and effective as possible.

b) **National Consciousness**: There is need for a sustained and structured process aimed at instilling the fabric of society the capacity to recognize and understand issues fully and to take actions to achieve possible solutions in a non-violent manner. This calls for programs that promote wider dissemination of information and providing a platform for free exchange of ideas and opinions. Such programs, if handled appropriately, could be an effective way to demonstrate that different ethnic groups possess unique and valuable cultural traditions and customs and that none are inherently violent or domineering.

c) A culture of peace is a culture that “Consist of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing, based on
principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that rejects violence, endeavours to prevent [violent] conflicts by tackling root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee all people full exercise of all rights and means to participate fully in the development process of their society’.

d) **Land reforms:** The use, access and ownership of land in Mt Elgon can only be addressed through survey and registration of customary and potentially productive land and codification of arrangements for its sale and lease. Registration of land would provide owners, and those settlers who have acquired it legally from traditional occupants, with security and would give those leasing land the confidence required to invest in appropriate infrastructure.

e) **Justice and reconciliation:** Achieving sustainable peace calls for greater pressure on the government to implement the TJRC report and bring prosecutions against those suspected of having committed crimes. Additionally, there is need for healing the wounds of victims through Amnesty program drawing on local customs and traditions associated with reconciliation and would require the perpetrators of crime to show appropriate contrition for their actions in a way acceptable to those they had wronged. There is a need to look at these as steps within a process that should be comprehensive and well-coordinated.
f) **Youth development:** As the government moves to institute strategies to address inequalities in the country, there is need to constructively and proactively focus on measures to include the youth not only in government policy documents but also in actual resource allocation and representation in visible public positions. This might include the expansion of the Youth Fund and Uwezo fund as well as other opportunities from both private and public sectors. Investing in the youth security should happen in a coherent, coordinated, and committed manner with other developments as a way of securing any progress attained or being pursued in other sectors of society.

### 5.3 Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is certain that the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon was not caused by any one particular event or issue, but by the culmination of a number of interwoven actors, interests and agendas. In as much as there are very convincing arguments on each side of the monocular narratives, whether of the nature of ethnic identity, or the role of natural resources especially land or other structural factors, they are insufficient in understanding the nature of protracted conflict as none of these presents a strong enough argument to exclude the other. Brown (1997) observes that “the search for a single factor that explains everything is comparable to the search of the Holy Grail- noble, but futile.” The set of causative factors is made complex by the ongoing dynamics of the conflict over time, which sees new radicalising elements emerge and increase in salience, while others
become less relevant. A central conviction from this study is that the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon is too serious a matter, and its costs too grave, for glib modeling, uninformed by histories of and unmindful of concrete conditions in, the societies under scrutiny. Of particular concern is that, the monicausal constructs have rendered the task of building durable and meaningful peace and security in the region and beyond extremely difficult. However, when done intelligently and with a keen eye to multicausality, it allows for a more encompassing and targeted conflict management processes to be developed rather than falling into the trap of focusing on simplistic mono-causal arguments to what is a truly complex phenomenon. The combination of these factors created the conditions and processes which eventually culminated to the level of protracted armed hostilities.

As seen in this thesis, the challenges posed by the protracted conflicts are complex and do not lend themselves to simple solutions. The success of any conflict transformation and peace-building efforts to help restore enduring stability in Mt Elgon depends on the implementation of strategies that address the root causes of the conflict. Furthermore, the strategies for managing and resolving protracted conflicts can only be multifaceted and multidimensional. This study contributed to this process by exploring how ethnic identity, struggle for land among other structural factors in Mt Elgon played their part in the conflict by disputing claims that single case entities were the root cause of the conflict in Mt Elgon. Based on a
thorough review of literature and field study, it has been demonstrated that indeed ethnic identity, natural resources-land and other structural factors contributed to the outbreak of violence in Mt Elgon. The study analysis revealed that the area remains at risk from the re-emergence of protracted conflicts though there is much that can be done to avert the situation and achieve enduring stability.

5.4 Reflections: Key Areas for Further Research

I conclude by pointing out a few areas that are still understudied, if not entirely terra incognita, even in the vast body of work on Mt Elgon. The first lacuna concerns theoretically informed micro level work on the specifics of the conflict. There is currently a major gap between explanations developed by scholars-almost all situated at the macro level-and details of the conflict as a series of acts of violence. To be precise, we know much about the “who” issue, but not scientifically. What we know has been written by human rights experts; foremost is the stunning work of Rawlence (2008) in “All the men have gone”. Additionally, TJRC also collected massive amounts of micro level data on victims and perpetrators of conflict, albeit most of this is inaccessible to scholars.

Another neglected issue is post-conflict Mt Elgon. Most scholarship seems interested in explaining the conflict but fails to look at the stunning challenges currently being faced in the area. The field is entirely captured by human rights reports, whose function is to document the many abuses but not to explain
dynamics. In addition, future work will need to focus on a number of areas, including: Comparative implications for other cases of protracted conflicts; improved methodologies and instrument implementation to measure the incidence of protracted conflict; and lastly need for increased attention to empirical research design to begin to address issues of causality.
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250


APPENDIX

Appendix A: Informed Consent

Background

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear. The purpose of this study is to give an insight in the how the various factors mutually reinforce or neutralise each other to produce and sustain protracted conflict in Mt Elgon.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You are free to not answer any question or questions if you choose. This will not affect the relationship you have with the researcher.

Consent

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Signature______________________Date ________________
Appendix B: Questionnaire Guideline

Ethnicity as a contributory factor of Protracted Violent Conflict in Mt Elgon

a) Is the relationship between ethnic groups characterized by dominance, potential dominance, or high levels of fragmentation?

b) What is the history of relations between groups? Is there a pattern of systematic discrimination or have relations been relatively peaceful and inclusive?

c) Do other divides, for example political exclusion or economic inequality, reinforce ethnic divisions?

d) Are there elites who face an economic or political incentive to mobilize violence along ethnic lines?

e) Is extremist ethnic or religious rhetoric increasing? Are elites beginning to create or promote ethnic ‘myths’?

Natural Resources as a contributory factor of Protracted Violent Conflict in Mt Elgon

a) Are there major resource scarcities?

b) What are the primary causes of scarcity?

c) Has scarcity led to resource capture?

d) Has scarcity led to population transfers?
e) Do the effects of scarcity (resource capture, population transfers) reinforce other divides (ethnic, religious, economic) and/or generate political competition between groups?

f) Do elites compete over the control of valuable natural resources (both renewable and non-renewable), scarce or not?

Structural factors as a contributory factor of Protracted Violent Conflict in Mt Elgon

a) Are there large socio-economic disparities? Do these reinforce other lines of division, such as ethnicity?

b) Is economic power tied to political power?

c) How pervasive is corruption or patronage? Does it flow along ethnic or other lines of division?

d) If there is a large informal economy, is it legal or illegal (i.e. based on smuggling of Small arms)?

e) What is the unemployment rate, particularly for young men in the areas?

f) Is the government able to exercise effective control over its territory?

g) Does the security sector (police/ justice sector) effectively and impartially settle disputes between groups or is there a perception of bias?

h) Are there well-established traditional methods of conflict resolution

i) Are there other factors (e.g. economic migration) that are tipping the demographic balance toward one group?
How do the above factors reinforce or neutralise each other to produce and sustain the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon?

a) Are there many incentives for violence (both greed and grievance) or only a few?

b) Are they longstanding and chronic or of fairly recent origin?

c) Do incentives for violence overlap and reinforce each other or cut across lines of division? For example, does access to economic opportunity overlap with ethnic difference or cut across ethnic difference?

d) Is there an alignment between grievance and greed? Are elites with a political or economic incentive to mobilize violence well-positioned to tap into a strong grievance?
Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion

(This brief is intended to guide debates in the focus group discussions)

a) Ethnicity as a contributing factor to the Mt Elgon Conflict;

b) Natural resources as a contributing factor to the Mt Elgon conflict;

c) Structural factors as a contributing factor to the Mt Elgon Conflict;

d) How these factors reinforce or neutralise each other to produce and sustain the protracted conflict in Mt Elgon.
Appendix D: Research Permit

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke
OUR REP:C20/CTV/PT/21022/10

The Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology,
P.O. Box 30040,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MR. CALEB MAKUMI WAFULA REG. NO. C50/NKU/PT/24557/10

I write to introduce Mr. Wafula who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. He is registered for M.A. Degree programme in the Department of History Archaeology & Political Studies in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Mr. Wafula intends to conduct research for a proposal entitled, “The Protected Conflict in Mt. Elgon: Towards a multi-Causal Analysis.”

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. LUCY N. MBAAFU
FCE: DEAN,GRADUATE SCHOOL
LNM/cao

Committed to Creativity, Excellence & Self-Reliance
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Ref. No. NACOSTI/P/16/40342/12274

Caleb Maikuma Wafula
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “The protracted conflict in Mt. Elgon: Towards a multi-causal analysis,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Bungoma County for the period ending 19th July, 2017.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Bungoma County before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

Boniface Wanyama
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Bungoma County.

The County Director of Education
Bungoma County.
Appendix E: List of Interviews

Key informants

1) KI1- Aug-2016, Kamachai
2) KI2- Aug-2016, Kamachai
3) KI3- Aug-2016, Chewangoi
4) KI4- Aug-2016, Chewangoi
5) KI5- Aug-2016, Kimilili
6) KI6- Aug-2016, Kapkateny
7) KI7- Aug-2016, Kapkateny
8) KI8- Sept-2016, Chepkurukur
9) KI9- Sept-2016, Chepkurukur
10) KI10- Sept-2016, Soet
11) KI11- Sept-2016, Soet
12) KI12- Sept-2016, Masahek
13) KI13- Sept-2016, Masahek
14) KI14- Oct-2016, Makutano
15) KI15- Oct-2016, Makutano

16) KI16- Oct-2016, Chwele

17) KI17- Oct-2016, Chwele

18) KI18- Oct-2016, Cheptoror

19) KI19- Oct-2016, Cheptoror

20) KI20- Oct-2016, Cheptonon

21) KI21- Oct-2016, Lukhome

22) KI22- Oct-2016, Chepkurukur

23) KI23- Oct-2016, Chewango

24) KI24- Oct-2016, Chepkurukur

25) KI25- Nov-2016, Kitale

26) KI26- Nov-2016, Kaptaboi

27) KI27- Nov-2016, Kaptaboi

28) KI28- Nov-2016, Kitale

29) KI29- Nov-2016, Kitale

30) KI30- Nov-2016, Kimilili
31) KI32- Nov-2016, Kimilili

32) KI33-Nov-2016, Chwele

33) KI33-Nov-2016, Chwele

34) KI34-nov-2016, Chwele

Expert Interviews


2) Expert Interview2-July -2014, Kigali

3) Expert Interview3-July -2014, Kigali

4) Expert Interview4-July -2014, Kigali

5) Expert Interview5-July -2014, Kigali

6) Expert Interview6-July -2014, Kigali

7) Expert Interview7-July -2014, Kigali

8) Expert Interview8-July -2014, Kigali

9) Expert Interview9-March-2015, Nairobi

10) Expert Interview10-March-2015, Nairobi


**Focus Group Discussion**

1) FGD1-August -2014, Kapsakwany.

2) FGD2-Dec -2014, Chepkurukur.

3) FGD3-August -2014, Soet.
Appendix F: Study Area Map

Source: Data Exchange platform for the Horn of Africa